

REMEMBERING PAUL WELLSTONE • DANIEL ELLSBERG'S SECRETS

In These Times

INDEPENDENT NEWS & VIEWS

December 9, 2002

THE AGONY OF DEFEAT

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\$2.95 Canada \$4.50 www.inthesetimes.com

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In These Times (ISSN 0160-5992) is published biweekly by the Institute for Public Affairs, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647. Periodicals postage paid at Chicago, IL and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *In These Times*, 308 E. Hitt St., Mt. Morris, IL 61054. This issue (Vol. 27, No. 1) went to press on November 8 for newsstand sales November 25 to December 9, 2002.

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Subscriptions are \$36.95 a year (\$59 for institutions; \$61.95 Canada; \$75.95 overseas). For **subscription questions, address changes and back issues** call (800) 827-0270.

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Complete issues and volumes of *In These Times* are available from Bell and Howell, Ann Arbor, MI. *In These Times* is **indexed** in the Alternative Press Index and the Left Index. Newsstand circulation through the IPA International Sales Cooperative at (415) 643-0161, or info@bigtoppubs.com.

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Editorial

A Matter of Conscience

When Paul Wellstone died, Americans lost a principled voice that never shied from speaking truth to power. Progressives lost one of their finest national leaders. And *In These Times* lost a friend, a charter subscriber and a faithful supporter.

One would be hard-pressed to name another national progressive figure whose leadership either commands or deserves such allegiance. In their eulogies, one senator after another remarked that Wellstone was a man of convictions. ("Unlike most of the rest of us," they all but added.)

Wellstone also stood out on Capitol Hill as a person who put his convictions into practice with a political strategy that valued the potential of applied democracy. In light of a humiliating Election Day defeat, the Democratic Party leadership might learn from Wellstone. (So too could those progressives who pursue the chimera of third parties or who eschew the taint of electoral politics and the give-and-take it entails.)

Wellstone understood how a citizen-based movement should work. In *The Conscience of a Liberal*, his 2001 book, he delineated the three ingredients of effective political activism: "Good ideas and policy, so that your activism has direction; grassroots organizing, so that there is a constituency to fight for the change; and electoral politics, since it is one of the ways people feel most comfortable deciding about power in our country."

Good ideas and policy? The national Democratic leadership offered none. As Wellstone wrote in a 1998 *In These Times* essay, "The question is not to be better at communicating, it's to have an agenda that's worth communicating." Dick Gephardt, Tom Daschle, Joseph Lieberman, Terry McAuliffe, et al., acquiesced to Bush's war-mongering, refused to take on Bush over tax cuts, and failed to highlight the crimes of Enron and other corporate lawbreakers. Their folly is underscored by the fact that Wellstone, the only senator in a tight race to vote against Bush's Iraq war plans, saw his lead over Norm Coleman increase after he defied conventional political wisdom and voted against the president's war resolution.

Grassroots organizing and the Democratic National Committee are contradictory concepts. Those Democrats who did mount issue-based, grassroots campaigns were fatally handicapped by a national leadership that failed to put a people-oriented agenda on the media map. The national Democratic leadership was less intent on organizing the grass-

roots than catering fundraising events for the denizens of corporate America.

In fact, one of the only electoral bright spots was the decision by Coloradoans to take private money out of public elections and pass the "Clean Money, Clean Elections" campaign finance measure championed by Public Campaign. Ditto for Arizonans who elected as governor Janet Napolitano, a Democrat identified with the Clean Election effort. Where was the national Democratic leadership on this issue of corporate wealth buying elections? Nowhere to be seen. They were too busy finding ways to raise money before the McCain-Feingold reforms kick in.

In *The Conscience of a Liberal*, Wellstone discussed his 1990 race against incumbent Sen. Rudy Boschwitz, in which he was outspent 7-to-1. "We didn't win by matching pollster against pollster, ad against ad, image-maker against image-maker," he wrote. "We won by including citizens in an inspiring grassroots campaign." (That campaign did include fundraisers, like the dinner put on by welfare mothers who made casseroles out of groceries bought with food stamps.)

Wellstone continued:

Organizing people for power and direct action to make social change might have worked for

After a humiliating defeat, Democratic leaders might learn something from Paul Wellstone.

the labor movement in the '30s and the civil rights movement in the '60s, but today with different historical circumstances electoral politics is the most effective way to make social change. ... Those who eschew electoral politics marginalize themselves. ... It is not that people don't want to change this system. They do. The problem is that the majority of people are convinced it will never change, that big money will always run politics. This sense of powerlessness corrupts. What could be accomplished is never attempted. The challenge is to mobilize millions of Americans from all walks of life to participate actively in a historical movement to restore our democracy.

That's the challenge. Are we up to it? Gephardt, Daschle, Lieberman and McAuliffe have clearly shown they are not.

—Joel Bleifuss

In These Times

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www.inthesetimes.com

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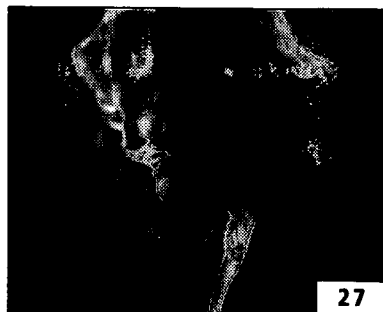
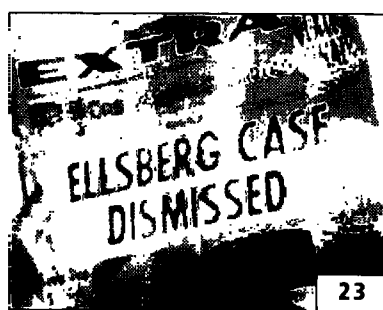
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Poetic Injustice

U.S. war interests in Turkey hinder democracy

By Ian Urbina

In its war against terrorism, the United States has trumpeted its intentions to spread democracy in a region where there is little. Many around the globe remain skeptical about whether toppling leaders is an effective method for cultivating a respect for the rule of law and a liberalization of the political process. However, there is one place where, with minimal diplomatic pressure, the United States could radically bolster prospects for democracy. To the scandal of its own people as well as the international community, longtime U.S. ally Turkey rigged its November elections. But the real scandal is that the United States had nothing to say about it.

Despite leading in the polls, former Istanbul mayor and candidate for prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan was not on the ballot when Turkish voters went to the polls on November 3. However, his Justice and Development Party still swept enough seats in assembly to form a government without coalition partners, an unusual event in Turkey. Unfortunately, the national Supreme Election Board had already banned Erdogan, the country's most popular politician.

His stated crime: reading poetry. In 1997, Erdogan gave a political speech in which he quoted from a poem by one of the country's nationalist patriarchs, Ziya Gökalp. The poem also happens to be among the education ministry's recommended reading for middle-school students. However, because of the poem's religious undertones, Erdogan was removed from office and sentenced to 10 months in prison (he served four).

His real crime: being a practicing Muslim. Turkey is an institutionally secular country, and the military nervously—some might say overzealously—polices against any encroachment of Islam into society and government. This military watchdogging has occasionally come at the direct expense of democracy. Three times in the past four decades, the Turkish

military has seized power, often on the pretext of anti-Islamist pre-emption. In 1997, the military instigated a bloodless coup along these lines to remove the republic's democratically elected and first Islamist-led government.

This is also not the first time the United States has turned a blind eye to its ally's misbehavior. For years, the State Department has kept quiet concerning Turkey's deplorable treatment of its Kurdish popu-

larly high these days as the United States aims to hit Saddam. The most militarily viable road to Baghdad runs from southern Turkey, and the air cover provided by the more than 50 U.S. fighter jets waiting at the base will be essential, much as it was during the Gulf War in 1991.

Furthermore, if the Pentagon wants to arm and train the Kurds in northern Iraq as a proxy force, it will need a green light from Ankara, which keeps the Kurdish population firmly under its thumb. Diplomatically, Turkey is also important as the only Muslim member of NATO. The sum of these factors creates a troubling divide between the rhetoric and reality of U.S. intentions to promote real democracy in Turkey.

Back home, the United States can explain away its double standards as realpolitik necessities: short-term compromises for long-term goals. But these duplicities may not be as easily swallowed among the majority of Turkish voters, who backed the JDP by a wide margin, even with its outlawed leader.

It's anyone's guess whether the ban on Erdogan's holding office will be lifted, or whether another member of the party will take control. It's equally unclear what path Turkey will follow now. Women wearing Islamic head coverings are presently banned from universi-

ties and government offices, a law that the Islamist JDP will likely seek to overturn. The JDP may also attempt to loosen restrictions on public prayer and tighten those on alcohol consumption. Though opposed to the war in Iraq, Erdogan will probably not block U.S. use of Incirlik, and he will continue the push for Turkey's membership in the European Union.

But the biggest issue is unemployment. As the Turkish economy has tanked, IMF-imposed austerity measures have hit working-class citizens the hardest. Only time will tell whether the Islamists can deal with those core concerns better than their secular predecessors. ■

Ian Urbina is based at the Middle East Research and Information Project in Washington.



Banned for a poem: Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdogan (left), leader of the Justice and Development Party.

lation. Since 1984, Turkey has been at war with the Kurds, both within and across its borders, leaving some 40,000 mostly Kurdish casualties. Fighting has displaced as many as 2 million civilians.

On an almost yearly basis, international human rights organizations cite Turkey for a laundry list of atrocities. Virtually all of the attack helicopters used by Turkey in this military effort are U.S.-sold. The prime motivation for Turkey's fight is a near-pathological fear of the possibility of an autonomous or independent Kurdish state being established by the 20 million Kurds in the southern part of the country.

Why the closely guarded silence on the part of Washington? In a word: Incirlik. America doggedly covets its access to this prime air base located in southwestern Turkey. The value of the base is particu-

Lula Lite

Leftist leader sweeps Brazilian elections

By Nicholas Rosen

RIO DE JANEIRO—October 27, 2002, will go down as a watershed moment in the history of Brazil's young democracy. It marks the day when, at voting booths across this vast nation, Brazilian citizens chose as their president by a wide margin Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva, a former metalworker turned politician who pledges to bring a long-overdue social agenda to the country.

His words feed eager ears in Brazil, where years of painful free market reforms have failed to bring long-promised economic growth and where, despite gleaming office towers and industrious urban centers, rates of poverty and underdevelopment are on a par with sub-Saharan Africa. It is of little surprise, then, that voters tossed out the Ivy League-educated technocrats who made up the outgoing government and hired on the leftist firebrand from Brazil's Worker's Party (PT).

Brazil's recent election has been referred to as a sign of the South American times. All across the continent, from Ecuador to Argentina, sluggish economic performance has dashed the hopes raised by free market reforms, culminating in a resurgence of populist ideals and a rejection of ruling elites and the Washington-bred economic model.

But the landslide victory of Lula and the PT should be understood as more complex than a simple ideological backlash against neo-liberalism. After all, Lula himself has become more complex. His dramatic election-year shift in aesthetics and politics has resulted in promises to respect Brazil's foreign debt obligations and to adhere to an IMF program that strictly limits spending in his new administration. He's even started wearing well-tailored suits. (This from a man who in past campaigns has opted for T-shirts and jeans, along with fiery demands to prosecute IMF officials for crimes against humanity).

"Lula Lite" has softened his tone on provocative issues like pension reform and the Free Trade Area of the Americas, but while some of the PT's hard-liners call him

a sell-out, Lula has not abandoned his support base—he has merely expanded it to include everyone from landless peasants to the captains of industry.

Wall Street has not been so convinced, however. For months, markets have been repulsed by the prospect of a Lula presidency, prompting a pre-election financial crisis that has left the Brazilian economy in a state of shock. As Lula settles into office without a word about installing a dictatorship of the proletariat—even issuing a few strategically market-friendly comments in the weeks surrounding the runoff—the beleaguered *real* is just beginning to recover.



Newly elected Brazilian President Lula da Silva.

But the global investment climate remains grim for a country so heavily laden with debt, even if Wall Street does get over its Lulaphobia, and the financial volatility that accompanied Lula's campaign presages important lessons for what he can do once in office. Any radical new plans for social investment and reform will be hemmed in by the realities of the marketplace. The new president's IMF austerity commitments leave nothing left over for spending on health care, education or much-needed land reform.

If he breaks with those commitments, Lula risks provoking a severe market reaction, which could reignite panic and lead to further turmoil. "Lula has little room to maneuver here," says Christopher Garman, a political analyst with the consulting firm Tendências in São Paulo. "If he is going to be attuned to market demands, it will be very difficult to make big changes."

Although the PT garnered the largest bloc in the lower house of Congress, it falls short of the majority needed to pass substantial legislation. So to make progress on important issues like social security and tax reform, the party will likely be forced to further dilute its once-radical social policy in an alliance with one of outgoing president Fernando Henrique Cardoso's erstwhile center-right parties. The market-sensitive jobs of Central Bank president and finance minister will likely go to members of these parties, who are trusted by the investment community to steer Brazil through the rough financial waters ahead.

While this notion may disappoint those hoping for a political sea change in Brazil, it could nonetheless prove beneficial. After all, while Lula may bow to the market on his choice to lead the Central Bank, he is expected to appoint his own people to the vital ministries of Health, Education and Planning. For all its self-reinvention, the PT is still committed to an "industrial policy" (a term of blasphemy in neoliberal policy circles) that could, if designed right, become a long-term strategy to promote the kind of export industries Brazil will need to grow in the future.

An optimistic vision of Lula's government, then, is one of progressive but pragmatic change, one in which shrewd, forward-looking and development-oriented policies take precedence over dogmas, be it the "Washington consensus" or reheated Marxism. "It could be what one might call 'neo-populism,'" says Columbia University professor Albert Fishlow, "pursuing social policies, but with great sensitivity to their effects on the interest rate."

Most important, though, are the implications for Brazilian democracy. Lula and the PT have matured into a potent political force and, after decades of military dictatorship and government by corrupt or plutocratic elites, they finally have the opportunity to unite the country behind an inclusive, left-leaning coalition built from the bottom up.

In South America, leaders whom people can actually believe in are a scarce commodity these days. While disenchantment in Buenos Aires and Asuncion has led to burning barricades and wholesale denunciation of the political establishment (or the ironic resurrection of old demons like Carlos Menem), the Brazilians have turned the ballot box. ■

Trading Places

Protesters rock FTAA meetings in Quito

By Justin Ruben

QUITO, ECUADOR—It was a scene without precedent, even in the stormy recent history of trade negotiations. U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick sat onstage with more than a dozen other economic ministers from across the hemisphere, flanked by activists holding

set of rules boosting corporate control over everything from education to health care to biodiversity. The Bush administration hopes to conclude negotiations by the end of 2004, allowing the treaty to go into force the following year.

Ecuador's powerful social movements, like their counterparts throughout Latin America, are alarmed at the prospect. "The FTAA would rob us of security in our work, would allow products to come in at prices that we can't possibly compete with and would eliminate our culture," says Juan Pablo Pacheco Morocho, a farmer from southern Ecuador who led a group of protesting campesinos from his province.



North and South unite against the FTAA.

signs that read, in Spanish, "Yes to life!" "No to the FTAA!" and "Another America is Possible!"

The audience—a raucous crowd of farmers, indigenous people and civil society leaders from across Latin America—chanted, "We don't want to be a North American colony!" Zoellick, meanwhile, stared determinedly at his shoe.

Zoellick and the protesters had come here for the 7th Ministerial Meeting of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). If implemented, the FTAA would drop trade barriers between the 34 countries of North and South America (minus Cuba) and install a sweeping new

"The FTAA would privatize services like water, and it would threaten our ecology, eliminating plants that purify the air, and drying up the rain. Ecuadorian laws would be replaced by new laws interpreted in secret by faceless foreign judges."

Morocho was among roughly 10,000 protesters who flooded the streets around the trade meeting on October 31. When protesters continued to press for entrance to the meeting, despite tear gas and a massive police presence, the Ecuadorian government eventually allowed a delegation of 50 social movement leaders in to address the ministers. It was in the ensuing chaos that Zoellick was forced to confront dozens

of chanting campesinos and to listen to the recitation of a statement that had been hammered out in dozens of workshops and plenaries during the previous week.

Leonidas Iza, president of CONAIE, Ecuador's powerful indigenous federation, addressed the ministers on behalf of the group: "We are in desperate shape," he said. "You couldn't possibly understand, you who were born in golden cradles and have never suffered. But we don't have food to feed our children. Our markets are flooded with cheap imports. Imported milk is dumped in Ecuador for half of what it costs us to produce it, but transnationals sell it back to us at prices we can't afford. We have no way to live, and the FTAA will only make it worse. When we complain, the U.S. government calls us terrorists. We don't mean this as a threat, but we are hungry and tired, and things have to change."

Iza's message was not lost on anyone in the room. The protests in Quito were only the most recent expression of a rapidly intensifying wave of resistance across Latin America to free trade and neoliberalism, a prospect that has put the Bush administration and its allies in the region on the defensive. Organizers in Ecuador excitedly point to other facets of hemispheric upheaval: Hugo Chavez's popular regime in Venezuela; Evo Morales, the coca-growing campesino who nearly became president in Bolivia; the angry middle classes regularly taking to the streets in Argentina; the Zapatistas in Chiapas; and, closer to home, the victory of Lucio Gutierrez, the candidate supported by the Ecuadorian social movements, in the first round of presidential elections on October 18.

The Quito protest marked perhaps the first time that this movement came together to a significant degree with its Seattle-bred counterparts to the north. North-South collaboration was nearly everywhere you looked in Quito. Under the auspices of Indymedia Ecuador, a newly created node in the alternative media network born in Seattle, activists from Argentina, Peru, Bolivia, Mexico, Brazil, Ecuador, Canada, the United States and Europe collaborated seamlessly to spread the word about the mobilization. Many of the campesinos and indigenous people who came to the protests arrived on buses paid for by student organizations and direct action



Something's Happening Here: Demonstrators streamed in to Washington from around the country on October 26 to tell the Bush administration, "No war with Iraq." Speakers who drew some of the loudest cheers included actress Susan Sarandon, U.S. Rep. Cynthia McKinney, former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark and Ben Cohen of Ben and Jerry's. The crowd, an estimated 100,000 to 200,000 people, at one point stretched to more than two miles as it surrounded the White House. Protesters from kindergarteners to gray-haired grandmothers carried signs saying, "How Many Iraqi Children Does a Hummer Get Per Gallon?"; "Middle-Class Suburban Homeowners for Peace"; and "Stop Bush's Weapons of Mass Distraction." The one that drew the loudest cheers read, "Wellstone Is With Us." —Sheryl Larson

groups in North America, and the AFL-CIO helped foot the bill for Ecuadorian labor's mobilization. Meanwhile, dozens of solidarity actions were organized from Argentina to Montreal.

The results of Quito were striking. The protests lent weight and urgency to the complaints of poor-country representatives, who united behind the demand that the Bush administration agree to reduce agricultural subsidies. In the end, the

ministerial declaration included language on agriculture that these countries viewed as a victory, and the United States felt obliged to present a plan to help poor countries fare better in trade negotiations. Perhaps more importantly, FTAA backers were forced to acknowledge the overwhelming opposition of the Latin American public.

But for at least some protest organizers, the real prize lay in the relationships built

between social movements across the Americas. Says Jose Encalada, director of international relations for Ecuador's largest campesino federation: "The FTAA has given us the opportunity to get to know each other and to begin constructing a coordinated resistance across the Americas. This is essential, because the only possibility of stopping neoliberal globalization lies in building unity, regionally and hemispherically." ■

Bad Energy

In Congress, it's payback time for oil and gas industries

By Charles Pekow

WASHINGTON—Under the guise of promoting energy production, the lame-duck Congress gets a last chance to reward the energy industry that put it in power. Over the past year, both the House and Senate have passed versions of a bill called the National Energy Policy Act to protect the conglomerates of the energy business. Only arguments over the size and shape of the goodies to big business—not the prin-

ciple of the matter—prevented legislators from boasting in November's campaigns that they passed an energy bill.

Congress could more honestly call its work the Campaign Contributors' Relief Act. The Republican House passed an omnibus bill with 7,101 "sections," adding up to about \$33 billion in subsidies for the fossil-fuel-burning energy industry. Citizens for Tax Justice calculates the bill would provide \$16.2 billion in tax breaks to oil, gas and coal companies, another \$8 billion to utilities, and billions more to other industries. "The House bill was a payback for campaign help for Bush," says CTJ Director Robert McIntyre.

No wonder the White House won't reveal what energy officials told Vice President Dick Cheney in his Energy Task Force meet-

ings. The Democratic-controlled Senate, less beholden to the energy business that both the president and vice president came from, crafted a bill with only 2,701 sections and a mere \$13 billion to \$14 billion in handouts. Both bills offer tax credits for offshore drilling and burning coal, two major pollution sources. Corporations would also get tax breaks of up to \$40,000 per auto they purchase that can run on alternate fuels. Buyers wouldn't even have to use alternate fuels, as they cover hybrids that also could run on gasoline or diesel. To encourage them to use alternative fuels, the Senate would provide further tax credits—the equivalent of up to 50 cents per gallon.

And under both versions, each new dwelling that meets energy efficiency standards could get a tax credit of up to

Don't Shoot, Teach [4.1]

Somebody's got to stop these rampaging music teachers. In October, Lois Emrich of Liberty Elementary School in Carolan, Illinois, threatened to shoot any of her fourth-graders who hit the wrong notes on their recorders. According to the *Daily Herald*, a suburban Chicago paper, Emrich also made veiled allusions to a storage closet where she stashed the bodies of refractory pupils and pointed to what she called a blood spot under the chair of one unfortunate pupil. Not surprisingly, this kind of talk scared the bejeesus out of her little angels. After parents complained, Emrich was briefly suspended, but administrators and parents reached an agreement that will allow her back in the classroom.

Gross Negligence [3.5]

To ride the Chicago Transit Authority's bus routes regularly is to become a connoisseur of the hellish service. On the brighter side, there are CTA employees like bus driver William A. Dorsey, who has been known to clean his own buses, even though it's not

his job to do so. No good deed goes unpunished in Chicago city government, however, so in November the CTA suspended Dorsey without pay for his infraction? Refusing to drive a bus staked with dayca-

According to the *Chicago Sun-Times*, the 27-year veteran driver alerted his supervisor to the problem. The supervisor instructed an employee to push a broom over the mess, but that did little to improve the situation. Dorsey insisted the bus was "nasty and filthy and unhealthy." Being forced to drive such buses—not too uncommon on the South Side—is "disrespectful to the black community," he added. In a pending disciplinary hearing, Dorsey could be fired.

Keepin' It Real [6.3]

American culture has come to this: Pro-football players are taking nocturnal dumps in Mary McCarthy's laundry basket. Mary is a co-ed at Barry University in Miami Shores, Florida. According to The Associated Press, she awoke in the middle of the night to discover a strange man squat-

ting in her dorm room's closet. The man turned out to be Najeh Davenport, a fullback for the Green Bay Packers.

Davenport maintains his innocence. "Where's the evidence?" he asked rhetorically. "Where's the manure?" Still, the fullback has agreed to do 100 or so hours of community service, in exchange for which prosecutors will drop felony and misdemeanor charges. Davenport says he wants to help kids get into college—presumably with loftier ambitions than his last visit.

Truth in Advertising [0.2]

Are the French honest to a fault, or do they just like to wind up the Yanks?

McDonald's French division has run a series of ads quoting health experts to the effect that moderate consumption of fast food isn't going to kill you. The campaign stopped well short, however,

of the kind of horseshit one would expect from this sort of ad Stateside. One spot appearing in the magazine *Revue Actuelle* quoted a nutritionist to the effect that there is no reason to abuse fast food, or visit McDonald's more than once a week.

Needless to say, there were some pissed-off letters at McDonald's corporate HQ in suburban Chicago. According to The Associated Press, company honchos issued a statement saying they "strongly disagreed" with the nutritionist's contention. Meanwhile, a spokeswoman at McDonald's France just puckered and shrugged. Looks like Pierre's a slacker in the war for "share of stomach."



\$2,000. But not for the struggling couple saving to make that down payment—instead, the credit would go to developers who would reap the bonanza for each home they build.

Both houses also approved giving a credit of up to \$30 million to companies for making energy-efficient washing machines and other appliances. So General Electric, which can afford to spend \$80,000 a month on an apartment for retired CEO Jack Welch, would qualify for part of that \$30 million. Maybe it would get another \$2,000 if the place were energy efficient. Manufacturers hardly need tax breaks as an incentive to increase energy efficiency when the Department of Energy already regulates efficiency and requires labeling of energy use so consumers can see before buying how much energy appliances use.

But the act doesn't stop at tax credits—it even pays industries taxpayer's cash. Each chamber saw fit to create a Green School Bus Pilot Program, giving \$260 million to \$300 million in grants to develop emission-less school buses. Sounds worthy until you realize that schools wouldn't see a dime of this money—it would go straight to General Motors, Ford, or whoever builds the vehicles.

The legislation would authorize billions for research on everything from oil bypass filter technology in automobiles to using gas flares. It would provide \$537 million over the next three years for coal technology research and development and \$10 million for oil shale research (an attempt to extract oil from rocks, which has never been shown to be economically feasible)—even an unspecified budget to help producers find natural gas under oceans over the next seven years.

DoE would give the private sector a whopping \$2.1 billion to find ways to improve lighting. The fusion business—an effort to burn plasma for energy and alternative to nuclear power, but which is likely to take decades to develop—would get \$655 million over the next two years. "Corporations can spend their own money on R&D," explains Jerry Taylor of the libertarian Cato Institute, "or they can get the government to do it."

Most of what the bill offers to those who might need energy assistance, such as funding to help low-income households pay bills and weatherize their homes, amounts to farce since Congress has

already funded these programs, and they face separate reauthorization next year anyway. The other support, including measures to improve energy efficiency in low-income areas and even a study on how promoting bicycling can save energy, amounts to a few drops compared with the tankful of federal largesse that the energy industry hopes to speed off with.

Business can consider the bill a better return on their investment than most drilling expeditions. The energy and natural resources industries together provided nearly \$65.9 million to fund the 2000 election and another \$39.5 million for the 2002 congressional elections (as of September, the latest figures available), according to the Center for Responsive Politics. Republicans received about 75 percent. But Democrats still owe the producers. Chief architects of the Senate bill, Energy and Natural Resources Committee Chairman Jeff Bingaman (D-New Mexico) and Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle (D-South Dakota), received \$136,651 and \$58,801, respectively, from the oil and gas industries the last time they ran for re-election.

In the likely event they don't reach a compromise, the bill will have to be scrapped—and Congress will hand the project over to the new class starting in January. What comes out then, unfortunately, can't possibly be better. ■

US POSTAL SERVICE STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION

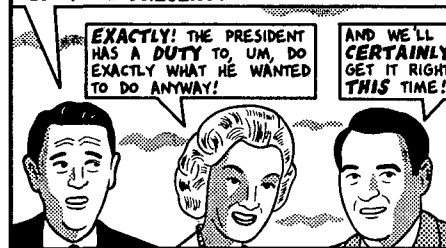
1. In These Times 2. 0160-5992 3. Sept. 30, 2002 4. Bi-weekly 5. 24 6. \$36.95 7. 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., 2nd Floor, Chicago, IL (Cook County) 60647-4002 8. 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., 2nd Floor, Chicago, IL (Cook County) 60647-4002 9. Joel Bleifuss, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., 2nd Floor, Chicago, IL (Cook County) 60647-4002; Joel Bleifuss, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., 2nd Floor, Chicago, IL (Cook County) 60647-4002; Craig Aaron, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave. 2nd Floor, Chicago, IL (Cook County) 60647-4002 10. Institute for Public Affairs (a nonprofit organization), 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., 2nd Floor, Chicago, IL (Cook County) 60647-4002 11. None 12. Has not changed during preceding 12 months. 13. In These Times 14. Oct. 14, 2002 15a. 14,850; 14,600 15b.(1) 11,005; 11,065 15b.(2) 0; 0 15b.(3) 1,014; 975 15b.(4) 120; 116 15c. 12,139; 11,156 15d.(1) 763; 756 15d.(2) 0; 0 15d.(3) 0; 0 15e. 0; 0 15f. 763; 756 15g. 12,902; 11,912 15h. 1,948; 2,688 15i. 14,850; 14,600 15j. 93.7%; 93.7% 16. Will be printed in Vol. 27, No. 1 (Dec. 9, 2002) of this publication.

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

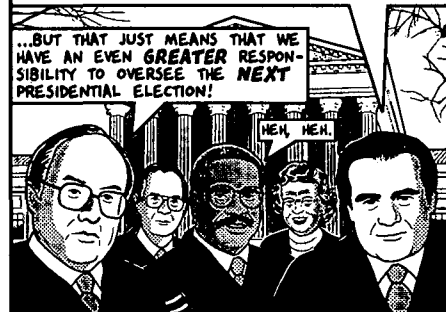
THE ARGUMENT GOES SOMETHING LIKE THIS: SURE, THE U.S. BACKED SADDAM FOR DECADES--AND, BY SOME ACCOUNTS, EVEN AIDED HIS RISE TO POWER-- BUT THAT ONLY **INCREASES** OUR MORAL OBLIGATION TO BOMB THE HELL OUT OF IRAQ NOW.

SO THE HORRIBLY MISGUIDED POLICIES OF THE PAST ACTUALLY **JUSTIFY** THE HORRIBLY MISGUIDED POLICIES OF THE **PRESENT**?



THE SUPREME COURT'S **FLORIDA FIVE** COULD PROBABLY BENEFIT FROM THIS ONE AS WELL...

SURE, WE SUBVERTED THE CONSTITUTION TO INSTALL OUR BOY **GEORGE** IN OFFICE...



IT'S A CLEVER RHETORICAL STRATEGY--AND ONE WHICH **DICK CHENEY** MIGHT FIND USEFUL, IF HE'S EVER FORCED TO RELEASE THOSE ENERGY TASK FORCE RECORDS...

--AND YOU ADMIT THAT YOU WERE **PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE** FOR CALIFORNIA'S FAKE ENERGY CRISIS?

YES--WHICH IS WHY IT IS NOW MY **MORAL DUTY TO REMAIN IN OFFICE** AND CONVEY ANOTHER ENERGY TASK FORCE!

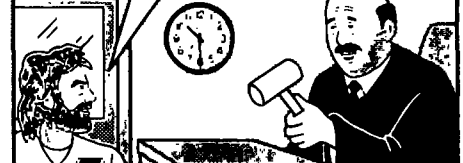


...NOT TO MENTION ANYONE **ELSE** WITH AN AWKWARD INDISCRETION IN THEIR PAST...

SORRY ABOUT THE CROSS-COUNTRY KILLING SPREE, YOUR HONOR--BUT THE WAY I SEE IT, I HAVE A **MORAL OBLIGATION** TO WALK OUT OF THIS COURTROOM A **FREE MAN**.

HOW ELSE CAN I POSSIBLY EVER ATOKE FOR MY CRIMES?

WELL, SINCE YOU PUT IT THAT WAY--**CASE DISMISSED!**



TM TOMORROW 10-30-02

Silenced with a Single Word

By Robert Fisk

Thank God, I often say, for the Israeli press. For where else will you find the sort of courageous condemnation of Israel's cruel and brutal treatment of the Palestinians? Where else can we read that Moshe Ya'alon, Ariel Sharon's new chief of staff, described the "Palestinian threat" as "like a cancer—there are all sorts of solutions to cancerous manifestations. For the time being, I am applying chemotherapy."

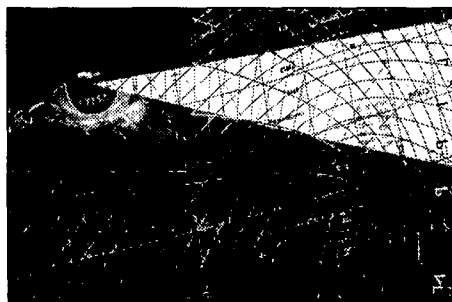
Where else can we read that the Israeli Herut Party chairman, Michael Kleiner, said "for every victim of ours there must be 1,000 dead Palestinians." Where else can we read that Eitan Ben Eliahu, the former Israeli Air Force commander, said "eventually we will have to thin out the number of Palestinians living in the territories." Where else can we read that the new head of Mossad, Gen. Meir Dagan—a close personal friend of Sharon—believes in "liquidation units," that other Mossad men regard him as a threat because "if Dagan brings his morality to the Mossad, Israel could become a country in which no normal Jew would want to live."

You will have to read all this in *Ma'ariv*, *Ha'aretz* or *Yediot Ahronot* because in much of the Western world, a vicious campaign of slander is being waged against any journalist or activist who dares to criticize Israeli policies or those who shape them. The all-purpose slander of "anti-Semitism" is now used with ever-increasing promiscuity against anyone—people who condemn the wickedness of Palestinian suicide bombings every bit as much as they do the cruelty of Israel's repeated killing of children—in an attempt to shut them up.

Daniel Pipes and Martin Kramer of the Middle East Forum now run a Web site in the United States to denounce academics who are deemed to have shown "hatred of Israel." One of the eight professors already on this contemptible McCarthyite list—it is grotesquely called "Campus Watch"—committed the unpardonable sin of signing a peti-

tion in support of the Palestinian scholar Edward Said. Pipes wants students to inform on professors who are guilty of "campus anti-Semitism."

The University of North Carolina is being targeted—apparently because freshmen were required to read passages from the Quran—along with Harvard where, like students in many other U.S. universities, undergraduates are



demanding that their colleges divest in companies that sell weapons to Israel. In some cases, American universities—which happily divested from tobacco companies—have now taken the step of blocking all student access to their records of investment.

Lawrence Summers, the president of Harvard, has denounced "profoundly anti-Israel views" in "progressive intellectual communities" that are—I enjoyed this academic sleight of hand—"advocating and taking actions that are anti-Semitic in their effect if not their intent." Said himself has already described all this as a campaign "to ask students and faculty to inform against pro-Palestinian colleagues, intimidating the right of free speech and seriously curtailing academic freedom."

Ted Honderich, a Canadian-born philosopher who teaches at University College London, tells me that Oxfam has refused to accept £5,000 (roughly \$7,800) plus other royalties from his new book *After the Terror* following a campaign against him in the *Toronto Globe and Mail*. Now I happen to take issue with some of Professor Honderich's conclusions, and I think his book—praised by Noam Chomsky—meanders.

I especially don't like his assertion that Palestinians, in trying to free themselves from occupation, have a "moral right to terrorism." Blowing up children in pizzerias—and Honderich's book is not an endorsement of such atrocities—is a crime against humanity. There is no moral right to do this. But what in God's name is Oxfam doing refusing Honderich's money for its humanitarian work? Who was behind this?

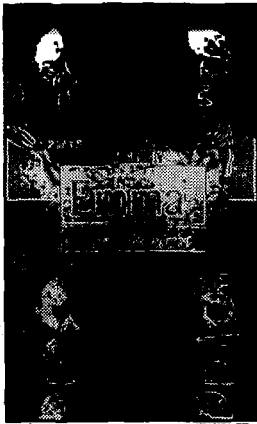
John Pilger made a program for Carlton Television called *Palestine Is Still the Issue*. I have watched it three times. It is accurate in every historical detail; indeed its historical adviser was a left-wing Israeli academic. But Carlton's own chairman, Michael Green—in one of the most gutless statements in recent British journalism—announced that it was "a tragedy for Israel so far as accuracy is concerned." Why Green should want to utter such trash is beyond me. But what does he mean by "tragedy"? Is he comparing Pilger to a suicide bomber?

And so it goes on. It is left, of course, to the likes of Uri Avnery in Israel to state that "the Sharon government is a giant laboratory for the growing of the anti-Semitism virus." He rightly says that by smearing those who detest the

By labeling all critics of Israel's occupation "anti-Semitic," the sting is taken out of the term.

persecution of the Palestinians as anti-Semites, "the sting is taken out of this word, giving it something approaching respectability." But we can take comfort that 28 brave academics have signed a petition condemning President George W. Bush's build-up to war and Israel's support for it and warning that the Israeli government may be contemplating crimes against humanity on the Palestinians, including ethnic cleansing.

Have Pipes and his chums put the names of these good men and women on their hate list? You bet they haven't. Because all of them are Israeli scholars at Israeli universities. I wonder why we weren't told about this. ■

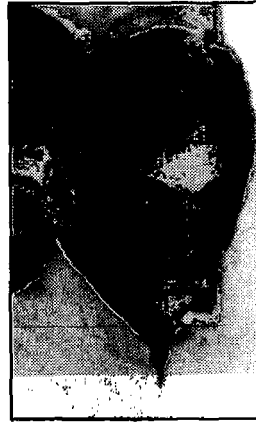


Emma

HOWARD ZINN

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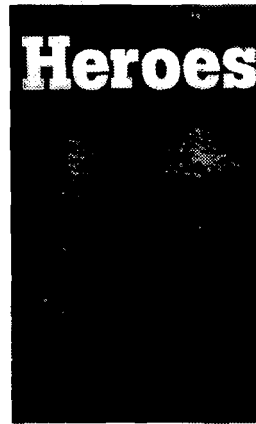
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THE AGONY OF DEFEAT

HOW DID THE DEMOCRATS MANAGE TO LOSE?

BY DAVID MOBERG



It is hard to find even a tiny sliver of silver lining in the ominous political clouds conjured up by the midterm elections.

With the loss of minimal Democratic control over the Senate and a Republican gain in their margin of power in the House, the only thing slowing a Bush romp is the threat of a Senate filibuster—a feeble hurdle considering the number of Democrats cowed by Bush even when they had control. With the most pro-corporate administration since at least the '20s, the Republican Party was not the only winner, as indicated by the *Wall Street Journal* headline: "GOP Sweep Gives a Boost to Bush—and Business."

Despite the dramatic shift in power that will clearly produce a wave of regressive, pro-corporate legislation and judicial appointments, the elections did not signify a right-wing mandate. The vote breakdown was not dramatically different from the stalemate of two years ago, when Bush was installed by Supreme Court intervention

after losing the popular tally, and Republicans briefly controlled Congress. But the shift was enough—like a small temperature dip, turning cold water to ice. And the freeze affected not just candidates, but progressive ballot initiatives, from a living wage in Santa Monica to public power in San Francisco to universal health care in Oregon, all of which were defeated.

Bush's record-breaking fundraising and his intensive last-minute campaigning certainly helped tip the balance to the Republicans. Idiosyncratic local election features also made a difference. Paul Wellstone, for instance, likely would have won in Minnesota, but the overzealous politicization of his memorial service by understandably distraught supporters hurt his stand-in, Walter Mondale.

Yet Democrats should have had an advantage: The job market and consumer confidence have weakened, corporate scandals

abound as public distrust of CEOs has climbed and, after decades of rising inequality, Bush's main legislative achievement was granting massive, budget-busting tax cuts that primarily benefit the super-rich. How did the Democrats manage to lose?

There were two big factors. First was the long shadow of 9/11. Then there was the Democrats' failure to offer a clear and persuasive vision of what they would do differently.

Bush's war on terrorism largely accounts for his high approval ratings and obfuscates his other agendas, from busting unions to preparing for war against Iraq. Tackling a president on foreign policy in a time of anxiety and crisis isn't easy. But Democrats could have presented an alternative vision, demanding that Bush focus on security against terrorism through better international cooperation and more effective police work, rather than

The Clean Alternative

By Micah L. Sifry

In 43 of the 50 states, the script for Election 2002 was depressingly familiar. According to the nonpartisan Center for Responsive Politics, the candidate who spent the most money won just over 95 percent of U.S. House races and 75 percent of Senate races.

House incumbents held onto their gerrymandered seats, their big campaign war chests scaring off challenges from within their parties, while several statewide races set fundraising records. One-third of all the House and Senate candidates running were "financially unopposed"—meaning that they had 10 times as much campaign cash as their nominal opponents.

Final data won't be out until the end of 2002, but even though it wasn't a presidential election year, the national parties' fundraising operations were raking the bucks in at a faster clip than in 2000. Ever wonder why Congress does so little work on Mondays and Fridays and most evenings? Most members are using that precious time to dial for dollars.

The good news is that it doesn't have to be that way, and the states of Arizona and Maine have proven it. This year, more than half the candidates for state office in both states ran as "Clean Elections" candidates, which means they received full public financing in exchange for limiting their spending and rejecting private donations. In Arizona, those candidates included two of the three major candidates for governor and 70 percent of all the contenders running for statewide offices. In Maine, two gubernatorial candidates—a Republican who lost his primary battle and a Green Independent—ran "clean." These participation rates are about twice that

seen in both states in 2000, the first time candidates had the option of seeking public funding.

What's more, about half of those "clean" candidates won their races, with the result that three-quarters of the Maine state Senate, a little over half of its assembly, and about 36 percent of the Arizona legislature will be made up of representatives liberated of their direct dependence on wealthy special interests. These new office-holders will include, most significantly, the Democratic governor and attorney general of Arizona, Janet Napolitano and Terry Goddard.

Napolitano received a total of \$2.3 million in public funding for her race, which she qualified for by turning in more than 4,000 \$5 contributions from registered voters. Her opponents tried to make an issue of the fact that several labor unions helped her collect some of those \$5 contributions, claiming that she would be beholden to them for that support. But most Arizonans saw quite clearly the big difference between being "bought" by a \$5 check and a \$5,000 fundraiser. More than 90,000 Arizonans made a \$5 qualifying contribution to a Clean Elections candidate this year, a much higher level of participation than the small number of high-dollar contributions typically made by the wealthy elite that finances most campaigns.

After former Rep. Matt Salmon, the Republican candidate for governor, attacked the Clean Elections system during one televised debate—saying, "We have a lot better things to do with our money rather than fund attack

ads"—Napolitano responded with force: "There's a saying, those who forget history are doomed to repeat it," she told Salmon. "We forget what it was like before Clean Elections. When everybody running for office had to do fundraiser after fundraiser, had to go to the lobbyists, say would you please help me put on a dinner, would you please raise me \$1,000 or \$2,000. The Clean Elections system takes that out of the process. It allows someone like me to talk to voters and not worry about my next \$250-a-plate fundraiser."

She added, "I think the value in getting the special interests out of these races so they no longer dominate the capital the way they have the last 12 years and put us in the hole is a huge value."

Not everyone in Arizona agrees. Calling the system "welfare for politicians," Republican Rep. Jeff Flake says he's organizing a ballot initiative to repeal the system in 2004. He will have an uphill battle, at best, in addition to most Democrats and Independents. Many Arizona Republicans, most prominently Sen. John McCain, have voiced strong support for the innovative reform. And polls show that about two-thirds of Arizona's voters concur.

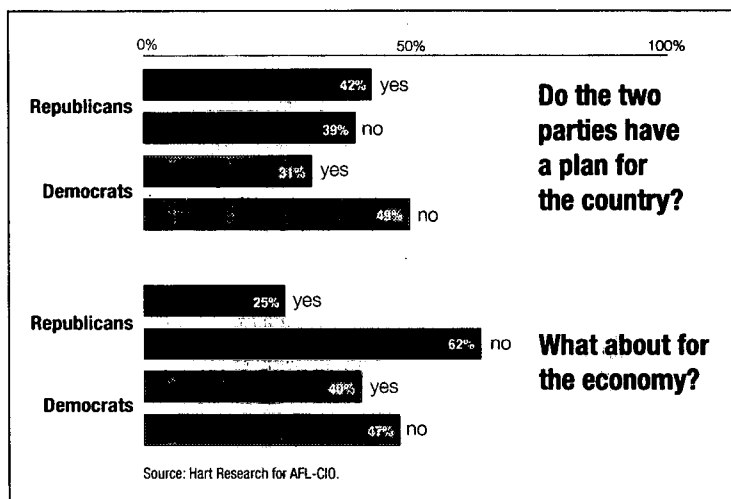
If the states are indeed the laboratories of democracy, then Arizona and Maine are showing that it is possible to significantly reduce the role of big money in elections—and put average voters back in the driver's seat. ■

Micah L. Sifry is senior analyst with Public Campaign, a nonprofit, nonpartisan campaign finance reform group based in Washington. For more information, go to www.publiccampaign.org.

initiate an unnecessary war against Iraq that risks dangerously backfiring and increasing the terrorist threat.

Democrats split on Iraq, but senators who opposed Bush did not suffer, with the possible exception of Max Cleland in Georgia, a paraplegic veteran subjected to nasty "soft on terrorism" ads for supporting the rights of federal homeland security workers. Public opinion, in any case, continues to move steadily away from the United States pursuing war on its own, even without much help from Democratic leaders.

It may be tough in parts of the country to challenge the president on foreign policy and terrorism, but if the Democrats can't provide a clear alternative on domestic social and economic policy, they're doomed. Polls showed that despite similar overall favorable ratings for both parties, 42 percent of voters thought Republicans had a clear plan for the country if they won control of Congress, and 39 percent thought they did not; but only 31



percent thought Democrats had a clear plan, while 49 percent said they did not. This was true even of the party's base: Although some 68 percent of union members voted for Democrats, "they do not think either party has a plan to strengthen the economy," says AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, "and that is a particularly strong indictment of the Democrats."

Republicans also muddled the issues where there really are clear differences between the parties. Although the Democrats had a better prescription drug plan for retirees, Republicans had an alternative, blurring the contrast. And Republicans hid from—and lied about—their intentions to privatize Social Security. But Democrats were just as responsible for the lack of clarity. Many Democrats, including 12 senators, voted for Bush's tax giveaway to the rich. While other Democrats were willing to criticize the tax cuts (putting undue emphasis on the way they unbalanced the budget), few were willing to call for their repeal and replacement with short-term rebates, tax cuts and spending programs aimed at working families.

There's deep voter distrust and resentment of corporate executives and the rich, but, with all-too-few exceptions, the Democrats failed to make the case for corporate accountability or using the tax system to fund vital needs and to create a fairer society with more opportunity and security for the average citizen. They could have run ads showing wealthy people—readily

available through groups like United for a Fair Economy—arguing against the abolition of the estate tax, but too many Democrats were afraid. Is there any wonder voters are confused?

Many Democratic strategists had simply hoped that a weakening economy would propel them into office, and there was a strong tendency—by design or default—to treat every race as a purely local affair. But while Bush provided a simple-minded national theme ("send me some allies"), the Democrats had none. The Democrats also lacked a clear leader, or at least the leaders they had—Dick Gephardt, Tom Daschle, even Al Gore—were so fixated on calibrating their presidential ambitions that they did not provide the hard-hitting opposition that House and Senate candidates needed.

Unions ran their effective get-out-the-vote operations, but lament that they were almost alone in the field for the Democrats. Meanwhile, Republicans—enlisting corporations to proselytize at work among their employees—have beefed up their operations, along with campaigns (as John B. Judis reported recently in *The New Republic*) to suppress the black vote partly by dishonestly fomenting distrust of white Democrats.

The consequences of the Democratic failure could be extreme. Republican leaders have already indicated that they intend to push through conservative judges bottled up in the Senate, making the federal judiciary even more solidly right-wing. Clearly, they intend to make the Bush tax cuts permanent, including elimination of the estate tax, and they are likely to cut taxes for investors and corporations (while "reforming" the system to make it more regressive, possibly by replacing the income tax with a national sales tax or value-added tax).

The new Congress will immediately approve homeland security legislation that denies workers civil service protections and the right to form a union, a prelude to an onslaught of legislative initiatives to make it even harder for unions to organize, undertake political action or even function. They almost certainly will promote legislation to limit business liability, pass Bush's energy plan, and implement the president's "faith-based initiative." They are likely to extend an austere version of welfare reform, increase privatization of Medicare (while passing a limited prescription drug benefit that's friendly to insurance companies), and push through a draconian bankruptcy law favored by the financial-services industry.

Despite some trepidation even in Republican quarters, it appears that they will also try to introduce so-called individual private savings accounts into Social Security, the first step in privatization that will necessarily require huge Social Security deficits, higher taxes, lower benefits or a higher retirement age (or some combination of all the above). But all of this will be sold as letting people keep more of their money to make their own choices while providing incentives to businesses to grow and create more jobs.

This isn't even the full Republican agenda. These items are all part of stripped-down plans mentioned by strategists who caution that Republicans have to be careful not to overreach.

Of course, war on Iraq (followed by war against Iran, as Ariel Sharon advised) will face even fewer obstacles, providing a convenient distraction from the domestic agenda and political

cover by boosting the president's popularity—unless the war bogs down, too many body bags start coming home and global backlash, including increased terrorism, exacts its toll.

All of this will provide Democrats ample opportunities to play defense and attack the president for his initiatives, but it is unclear how willing they will be to do that. The leadership is discredited and in disarray, and congressional Democrats are divided. But resistance will not be enough. Unless the Democrats can articulate a progressive vision that addresses the needs of most Americans and challenges the corporate agenda, it will lose its theoretical advantage among an electorate that is moving in its direction demographically.

At this point, progressive constituency groups absolutely must develop a coherent alternative strategy and push it aggressively

against both Democrats and Republicans. Without grassroots pressure, too many Democrats will cling to Bush, further befuddling any Democratic message. Too often in recent years progressive organizations have deferred to Democrats in Congress to define both the political issues and the policy options.

But it is also important that the varied groups with their own distinct constituencies forge a more coherent message among themselves. The lack of communication among progressive groups—labor, women, environmentalists, civil libertarians, peaceniks, civil rights groups, global justice activists and more—contributes to the confusion and failure of the Democrats. The only silver lining in the dark political clouds might be that the elections—and the consequences soon to follow—will stimulate that move to a more unified and effective progressive political voice. ■

Mixed Messages

By Ana Marie Cox

The election results prove that those who said the reign of Bush the Younger resembles an early-'90s flashback to his father's administration were almost right. It's just that now, with the addition of a Sununu and a Dole to the cast of familiar characters installed in Washington, one needs to flip the time machine back another few years. Welcome to the Revenge of the Reagan Era: Episode Two.

But the Republicans aren't the only ones nostalgic for the thrilling days of trickle-down economics, budget deficits and vengeful Pun-tan attorneys general. The appearance of Walter Mondale and Frank Lautenberg as Senate candidates had some searching their closets for other, well worn and almost forgotten items that might also come back in style: leg warmers or Members Only jackets, maybe.

Of course, Mondale lost. Among all the defeats of Tuesday night, his was undoubtedly the blitest and will be one of the most eagerly dissected. This, despite unusually good reasons to ignore the race entirely. The failure of Voter News Service to provide the exit poll information that usually fuels the speculation of Wednesday morning campaign managers is the most compelling justification to refrain from extrapolating too much from the Minnesota race (and, by extension, the entire election).

With that, we will never know what voters really meant by sending Republican Norm Coleman to Capitol Hill. Did Mondale himself lose to Coleman? Did the spirit of Paul Wellstone lose to Coleman? Or—as I suspect—did Mondale lose to the spirit of Wellstone? That is, Mondale lost because he was a stal-

wart party insider trying to replace a man who voted against his own party repeatedly and without remorse. Fritz paled in comparison. The few examples of partisan pettiness on display at Wellstone's memorial service and the subsequent "backlash" against Mondale are probably less important than people realize.

But in all the "what went wrong" gloviating that's spawning from the usual talking heads, no one has argued that Mondale lost because he wasn't enough like Wellstone. Indeed, the Democratic Leadership Council is arguing, in effect, that Mondale lost because he wasn't enough like Coleman. The loss of Paul Wellstone's Senate seat, they said in a press release Wednesday, represents a hard-to-miss rebuke to the base mobilization strategy.

"We agree with the many Democrats," the release continued, "who are saying the party needs a bigger, bolder, clearer agenda and message. But we disagree with those who are saying that the party should achieve that clarity simply by moving to the left."

One might ask, what's left besides the left? Why, the center, of course. The very position that Democrats have fought the Republicans for since, well, Mondale lost everywhere except in Minnesota.

This call for, as the DLC puts it, a "positive, centrist" message suggests that liberals will squander the chance to respond to the second coming of the Reagan era just as they did the first. They will attempt to beat the enemy by joining him in a very crowded middle. The

argument that this worked for Clinton fails to account for how his success is proving to be the exception, not the rule.

New Democrats lost big on Tuesday. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend (one of the DLC's "100 to Watch" in 2000) lost the Maryland governorship to Bob Ehrlich, a man whose biggest campaign promise was to legalize slot-machine gambling. Jean Shaheen, who lost the New Hampshire Senate seat to John Sununu Jr., is a former member of the board of directors of the New Hampshire DLC. Bob Clement, a charter member of the House's New Democrat Coalition, lost a Senate seat in Tennessee to a mid-'90s flashback, Lamar Alexander (of "Lamar!" fame).

A bolder, clearer agenda and message are certainly in order. The DLC and fellow New Democrats are noticeably vaguer about the specifics of their positions. And to be fair, policy and ideology have never been high on their list of priorities. The New Democrats have moved to the center not because they want to enact specific legislation but because they want to win elections. All statements and positions flow from that. It is nothing less than a tragedy that Tuesday's tremendous losses will not remind them of what is really lost when people run for office based on demographic trends and not ideas. Those that claim to want to honor the legacy of Paul Wellstone would do well to remember his observation that when one runs based on convictions, "there is, of course, no guarantee of success." But he continued, "politics is not about observations or predictions. Politics is what we create by what we do, what we hope for, and what we dare to imagine." ■

Remembering Paul Wellstone

By David Moberg

Everyone devoted to greater social justice suffered a deep loss when the plane carrying Sen. Paul Wellstone and members of his family and campaign staff crashed in northern Minnesota. Paul—to nearly everyone, he was Paul, not Senator Wellstone—was an energetic, joyful, good-humored crusader whose passions triggered hope and commitment in others. While he showed unwavering dedication to empowering average citizens and using government to improve their lives, he maintained an open-minded, respectful dialogue with both his constituents and the social movements with which he proudly identified. But he was also a doggedly tough fighter against his antagonists, whatever the odds.

It understates his virtue to say that he had a common touch. He had unmistakable empathy for "ordinary people," especially those most in need of the compassion of others, but he also treated them with the dignity they deserved. He was a fundamentally decent, likeable and trustworthy individual with a great talent to communicate persuasively his arguments for justice, equality, democracy and solidarity. His loss is a reminder that individuals, with their distinct personal attributes, make a big difference in the struggle for a better world, despite the importance of movements, organizations, ideas and broader forces of social change.

But Paul would want his legacy to be not just an appreciation of his own contributions or personal merits, but a call to arms. He was above all an organizer. He worked with grassroots movements in Minnesota, while writing about them and encouraging his students at Carleton College to participate (to the consternation of administrators). But his distinctive accomplishment was linking the movements of workers, farmers, environmentalists, feminists and many others with each other and with electoral politics. Paul worked to frame issues and policies that would realize the aims of these movement constituencies and also create a basis for unity among them, forging not just a "blue-green" coalition, but a broader, more unified progressive movement.

At the same time, he transformed electoral politics with his reliance on a modernized version of the vanishing political tradition of person-to-person mobilization by an army of volunteers. While he used TV ads (often cleverly) and could raise

money, his margin of victory—despite theoretical vulnerability for his progressive stands—came from the troops on the ground. By linking electoral and non-electoral politics, he strengthened both.

As an organizer, he was interested in changing people's ideas, not in being a weathervane of public opinion. After his death, Paul was widely praised for his principled politics. He showed that most famously in his solitary vote against a harsh version of welfare reform and in opposition to new war powers for Bush, but he was also a lonely fighter against a draconian, bipartisan bankruptcy bill that he persistently delayed. Equally important, however, he demonstrated to the mass of timid and calculating politicians, whose ambition is mainly getting themselves elected, that it was possible to be principled and win.

People do respect leaders who have the courage of their convictions, but the great majority of people also respected Paul, even if they disagreed with some of his votes, because of what those principles were. Phil Gramm and Dick Armye might also be principled, as the *Wall*

Street Journal editorialized in its perverse appreciation of Wellstone, but their devotion to free markets, private property and the rights of the rich doesn't resonate with the great majority of citizens as deeply as Paul's aspirations for fairness, compassion, equality and a peaceful world, where the well-being of both nature and humans, in all their variation, are nurtured and protected. Paul inspired not just because he was principled, but because of the nature of his principles, which appealed to the transcendent dimensions of human nature.

Paul could lash out fervently against corporate greed and political misdeeds, and he was one of the Senate's harshest critics of the way corporate globalization has reshaped our lives. But he always brought a hopeful message, based on the belief that politics could be ennobling, that most people really cared about their neighbors (even those on the other side of the globe) and that a new world could be born out of this flawed but still vital nation. It will be hard to find messengers that will match him. It is imperative to keep his message alive. ■



Paul Wellstone appeared in the pages of *In These Times* on numerous occasions over the past 26 years. The following selections are some of the highlights.

State Auditor Race a Hot One

October 6, 1982

Wellstone has not been afraid to speak out on issues that some feel are far removed from the jurisdiction of the state auditor. He has delivered speeches advocating a citizens' audit of the Pentagon and calling for a farm protest as big as the rural civil disobedience of the '30s. The nuclear freeze is as important to his campaign as any of the local issues. ... "This isn't a radical campaign," he declares. "It's part of a long history of populists holding high the vision of a better world and fighting hard to make that dream come true."

Setting Standards

June 6, 1990

"I don't say it won't be difficult—running a grassroots campaign—but we can't play by Boschwitz's rules and win," explains Wellstone, speaking over a supper of deli meats and tabouli in his Northfield home. "That is what Democrats around the country do too often. You're supposed to raise the same money, hire the same pollsters, run the same ads."

To Wellstone, winning in November depends on winning the voter's trust. "Vaclav Havel told our Congress that the highest order of patriotism is to speak honestly to the people about problems and issues you're confronted with," he says. "They may have listened to him, but I'm not sure they heard him."

Working in Opposition

January 23, 1995

Wellstone has vowed to make sure the Democrats will not repeat the mistake they made in 1981, when they capitulated to the Republican agenda.

... "This is the time for very strong opposition politics," Wellstone says. "When you really look at the Republican agenda, it represents the biggest change in American politics in my adult life. It isn't an attempt to overthrow the '60s; it is an attempt to undo the '60s."

Q&A: Our Man in the Senate

January 6, 1997

Many progressive Democrats who live outside of Minnesota view you as their senator and themselves as part of your constituency. How do you see yourself fulfilling this national role?

I don't know if I have an answer yet. I am going to think about the way I can make the biggest contribution on the national level to building a progressive politics. We have to do it. Many of us have to do it. That's crystal clear. I am determined to have a good strong national presence as a senator. ... I don't want to make too large a claim, or sound conceited, but I am determined to be a United States senator who can contribute to the organizing that builds a much stronger progressive politics in this country. It won't happen in Washington.

Wellstone in His Own Words

June 14, 1998

You don't like a special-interest politics? You think when it comes to concerns for yourself, your loved ones, your family, your community, that those concerns aren't of concern in Washington? Well, you shouldn't be surprised because the truth of the matter is, the greatest ally of special-interest politics is not the parties and not Congress—it's when people don't register, don't vote, don't organize and when people don't get involved in public affairs.

You can't check out when it comes to your citizenship. You have to be part of this. You have to speak up. We're going to need you to move our country forward on an agenda of reform, opportunities, education,

good jobs, decent wages, health care and building communities—making the United States of America all it can be going into the next century. That's our politics, and we can win on it.

The Great Debate

November 3, 2000

Sen. Paul Wellstone, the Minnesota Democrat who backs Gore but eschews criticism of Nader, knows better than perhaps anyone else on the American left the challenge and the potential of a more engaged and tactically savvy left politics. ... "I really do believe it's important that Gore beat Bush," Wellstone said. "But I want to tell you something. It's just as important that we capture the energy of this dialogue that we've got going on the left and turn it into something."

November 7 is important because it's Election Day, but November 8 may be even more important for progressives. On November 8, no matter what happens, we've got to take all these questions and arguments, all this energy that's being poured into beating Bush with Gore and into building an alternative with Nader, and turn it into something.

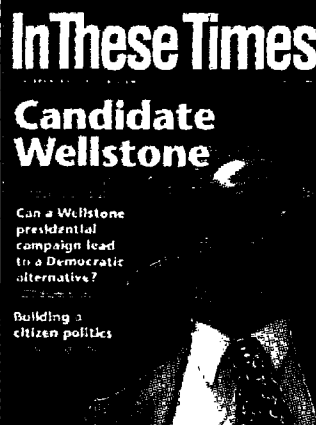
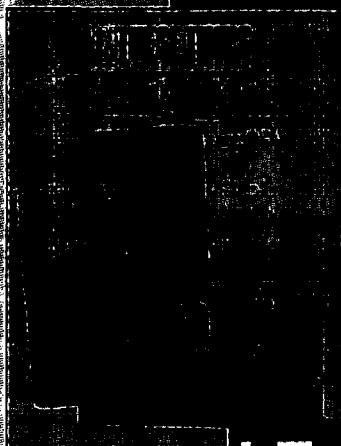
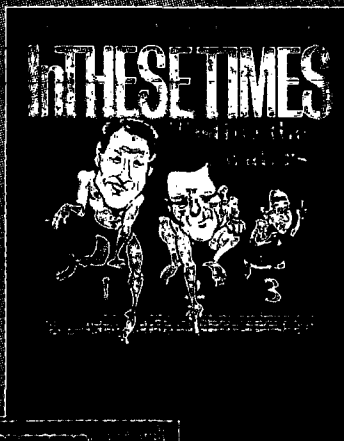
Third Time's the Challenge

August 19, 2002

Wellstone is respectful of the fractious movements that supply many of the troops for his grassroots politicking, but he is frustrated with the way many progressives evaluate political strategy.

"I always remember that [historian] Barrington Moore talked about the historically viable options," he says. "Don't do some analysis that says welfare mothers in the '60s should have made a coalition with the building trades. Well, they would have liked to, but the building trades weren't interested. You judge people by what are historically viable options. I'm very proud of what I've done in the Senate."

At the same time, he says that progressives need to better understand and tolerate differences among themselves. "It always makes me angry when people assume—and it happens on the left—that if someone takes a different position, it's only because he doesn't have courage, not because he doesn't have a different position." ■



Breaking the Bank

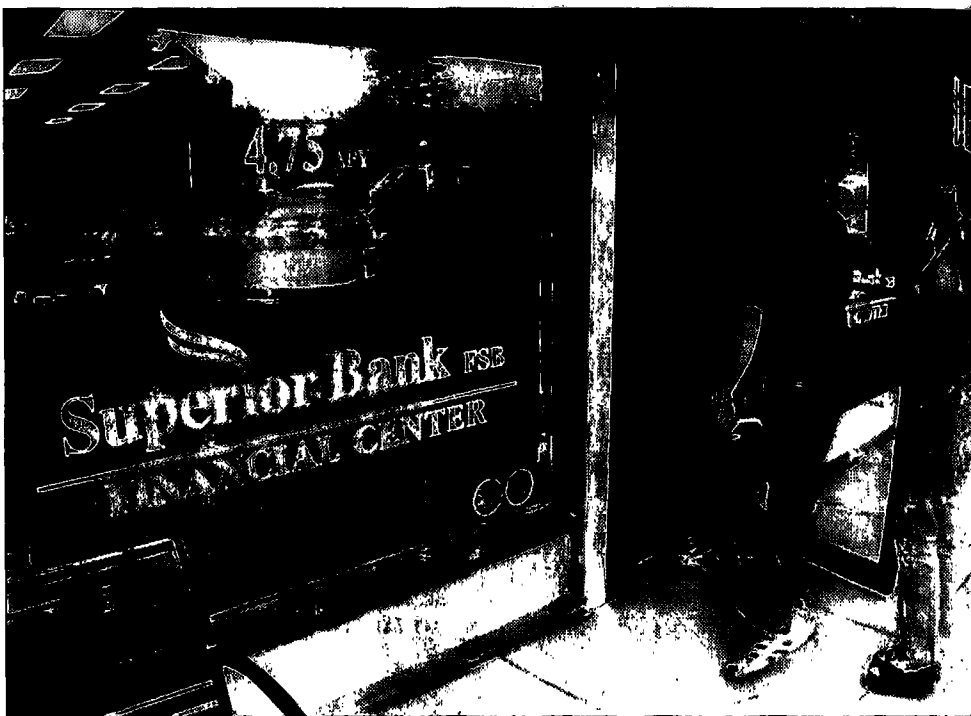
By David Moberg

After federal regulators closed the \$2.3 billion Superior Bank in July 2001, investigations revealed that the suburban Chicago thrift was tainted with the hallmarks of a mini-Enron scandal. New legal developments are adding additional twists, including racketeering charges. And yet the bank's owners, members of one of America's wealthiest families, ultimately could end up profiting from the bank's collapse, while many of Superior's borrowers and depositors suffer financial losses.

The Superior story has a familiar ring. Using a variety of shell companies and complex financial gimmicks, Superior's managers and owners exaggerated the profits and financial soundness of the bank. While the company actually lost money throughout most of the '90s, publicly it appeared to be growing remarkably fast and making unusually large profits. Under that cover, the floundering enterprise paid its owners huge dividends and provided them favorable loans and other financial deals deemed illegal by federal investigators.

Superior's outside auditor, which doubled as a financial consultant, engaged in dubious accounting practices that kept feckless regulators at bay. Many individuals—disproportionately low-income and minority borrowers with spotty credit records—had apparently been exploited through predatory-lending techniques, including exorbitant fees, inadequate disclosure and high interest rates. In the end, more than 1,000 uninsured depositors lost millions of dollars in savings in one of the biggest bank failures of the past decade.

Yet unlike Enron, the people behind Superior's collapse were not *nouveaux-riche* corporate hustlers, but members of Chicago's Pritzker family. The Pritzkers, whose two current patriarchs—Robert and his nephew Thomas—tie for 22nd



Hopefully, they were on their way in to close their accounts.

place on *Forbes'* list of the richest Americans, own an empire valued at more than \$15 billion, including the Hyatt hotel chain, casinos, manufacturers and real estate, and they are major contributors to both political parties. They were equal partners in the private ownership of Superior with New York real estate developer Alvin Dworman, a longtime associate of Thomas' father, Jay Pritzker, who died in 1999.

And Superior's accounting and consulting was not provided by the disgraced Arthur Andersen, but by Ernst & Young. When regulators shuttered the bank, the publicity-shy Pritzkers, who take pride in their philanthropy (such as the prestigious international architecture award in the family name) quickly negotiated what appeared to be a generous settlement to stay out of the newspapers and the courtrooms.

But now both the Pritzkers and Ernst & Young may face the legal and public relations uproar they were trying to avoid. On November 1, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) sued Ernst & Young for more than \$2 billion. The FDIC alleges that the firm concealed its improper accounting practices at Superior to facilitate the sale of its consulting unit for \$11 billion, leading to Superior's insolvency and ultimately costing the FDIC \$750 million. Ernst & Young denies responsibility, blaming the bank's managers and board, failed regulation and changing economic conditions. Investigators from the FDIC, Treasury Department and the General Accounting Office (GAO) had cited all those causes for Superior's failure, but also had criticized Ernst & Young's flawed work and conflicts of interest.

Meanwhile, in a case that has received no public notice, uninsured depositors are bringing a charge of financial racketeering against one-time board chairwoman Penny Pritzker, her cousin Thomas Pritzker, Dworman, other bank principals and Ernst & Young. In this federal class-action suit filed under the RICO (Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organizations) statute, plaintiffs' attorney Clint Krislov claims that those who controlled Superior induced depositors to put money in the bank, "corruptly" funneling money out of the bank to "fraudulently" profit the owners. Pritzker attorney Stephen Novack says that the defendants will ask to dismiss the case as having no merit. Such a RICO suit has rarely, if ever, been used to recover money lost in a bank failure, partly because the owners in such cases, in the words of bank consultant Bert Ely, "usually don't have a pot to piss in." But the Pritzkers have a gold-plated pot.

This may not be the last of legal battles stemming from the Superior failure. Published reports indicate that a federal grand jury has been investigating potential criminal wrongdoing and that the Internal Revenue Service could press claims against the owners for tax evasion.

Superior opened for business with substantial federal assistance and guarantees, but the Pritzkers also reportedly received \$645 million in tax credits as an inducement to buy Lyons. This was not the first Pritzker-Dworman joint venture into banking. In 1985, the partners had acquired New York-based River Bank America. But in 1991, federal and state regulators closed River Bank, which was engaged in large-scale real estate speculation, when they discovered that the bank had inadequate capital and was badly managed. Nelson Stephenson, the chief financial officer of River Bank, later became chairman of Superior.

In 1992, the Pritzkers and Dworman transferred ownership of Alliance Funding Company, a nationwide mortgage banking company the partners had founded in 1985, to Superior Bank, which began specializing in selling securities backed by subprime mortgages. Prospective homeowners with less-than-stellar credit ratings often must turn to such subprime lenders, which typically charge higher interest rates to compensate for the higher risk of default.

But a great many subprime lenders also unfairly exploit borrowers, seeking them out through aggressive television, direct mail and telemarketing techniques, then

from other brokers. They would then issue securities with high credit ratings but lower interest rates than what they charged borrowers. As collateral, these securities were backed by the stream of income from the mortgages. Superior Bank would retain "residual interests"—part of the collateral mortgages plus some of the excess mortgage interest—but they also retained responsibility for all of the potential losses, or what's known in the business as "toxic waste."

Because of the greater risks of subprime lending, it was difficult to project the future value of Superior's residual interests. But aided by Fintek, another subsidiary of CCFC, and abetted by Ernst & Young, Superior made extremely rosy projections and—like Enron—booked those projected profits as immediate, or "imputed," earnings. The extremely optimistic value of some residual interests was also counted as part of Superior's capital, which banks must maintain at regulated levels—depending on their condition and type of business—to make sure that depositors can be repaid.

Examiners from the Office of Thrift Supervision (OTS) expressed concern about aggressive subprime policy, the value of residuals, the level of capital and other bank practices early in the '90s. But Superior's managers and board filed erroneous reports and repeatedly failed to take any of the action that regulators recommended. Nevertheless, according to investigators, the OTS did not take any corrective action. They were persuaded that

management was experienced (even though two top managers had been involved in large losses or failures at other thrifts); that Ernst & Young had given its approval in annual audits without any reservations (even though the firm had a long history of penalties and censure for its involvement in high-profile thrift failures); and that "because of their financial status, the OTS placed a great deal of reliance on the ability of the owners to inject capital if the institution encountered any financial difficulties," as the FDIC inspector general's report stated.

When a suburban Chicago thrift collapsed, one of America's wealthiest families wrecked lives and made out like bandits.

The problems at Superior Bank date back to at least 1988, when the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, in an effort to conceal the depths of the developing savings-and-loan crisis, hastily made generous arrangements for the takeover of several failed thrifts. The Pritzkers and Dworman bought the failed Lyons Federal for the relatively modest price of \$42.5 million, with each using a shell corporation to control half of Coast-to-Coast Financial Corporation (CCFC), a holding company created to own Superior.

charging excessively high interest rates and exorbitant fees. Since many borrowers are in difficult situations and financially unsophisticated, they often are duped into agreeing to harsh conditions, such as stiff penalties for pre-paying their mortgages if their credit improves or interest rates drop, or improper costs, such as having the entire dividend for a 30-year-mortgage insurance policy included up-front in their mortgage.

Superior Bank accumulated mortgages that originated from its own branches or Alliance offices, as well as those bought

Meanwhile, Superior was growing rapidly: Loan volume rose from \$200 million generated in 1993 to \$2.2 billion in 1999, with the value of securities issued reaching \$9.4 billion. The bank reported a return on assets that was 12 times the industry average. But its reliance on the risky residual interests from its mortgage securitization soared to levels far out of line with the rest of the industry, and by 2000 the bank's residual interests were valued at more than four times its less fictional capital (such as stockholder equity). Superior expanded its business to subprime auto loans, then had to pull out because it was clearly failing.

All this should have looked like a sea of red flags to regulators, but they issued modest warnings and failed to follow up when management ignored their recommendations. Superior's management actually revised its accounting methods in 1997 to further exaggerate its projected earnings, and it more than doubled the volume of the lowest quality loans in the following years. It was all a house of cards, but a very lucrative one for the owners. During the '90s, the bank paid CCFC—and thus the Pritzkers and Dworman—more than \$200 million in dividends.

There was a small problem, however. From 1995 on, investigators concluded, Superior was actually losing money, except for the fictional "imputed" earnings. So the dividends effectively were being paid out of the growing deposits, a practice that Ely describes as having "Ponzi-like characteristics." Furthermore, in 2000 Superior sold loans to CCFC, which the holding company immediately resold for a \$20.2 million profit. Such a sale of assets at less than fair market value to insiders is a violation of federal law. There were other loans made to CCFC and its affiliates totalling \$36.7 million—all in violation of the Federal Reserve Act—that were never repaid, the inspector general reported.

Superior also supposedly loaned the Dworman family's shell company \$70 million in 1996, but even though Dworman promised to pay it all back by the end of 1999, the inspector general



Penny Pritzker

found no evidence of any payments being made. (Dworman reportedly claimed that the money was a dividend payment concealed as a loan, which would raise questions about tax evasion.) All these transactions enriched the Pritzkers and Dworman at the expense of the bank—and ultimately the FDIC insurance fund and uninsured depositors.

In the spring of 1999, both the OTS and FDIC downgraded Superior's rating. Over the course of nearly two years, Superior and Ernst & Young resisted the analysis and recommendations of the regulatory agencies, but by January 2001 Ernst & Young finally agreed that the

Dworman—agreed in March to provide. Then in July regulators reported that, as a result of overly optimistic assumptions, the bank would need to write off an additional \$150 million of its residual interests. The Pritzkers pulled out of the agreed capital plan, and the feds closed the bank.

Wanting to avoid a lawsuit, the secretive Pritzkers quickly agreed to what the FDIC hailed in December as the biggest settlement they had ever negotiated. The Pritzkers would pay \$100 million immediately, then \$360 million over 15 years. But there were lots of little provisions in the agreement that benefit the Pritzkers. First, as former bank consultant and longtime thrift watchdog Tim Anderson notes, the \$100 million doesn't even quite pay back all of the unpaid loans made to the owners. The Pritzkers also pay no interest on the \$360 million, and since it is paid over many years, the real cost to the Pritzkers may be only around \$250 million. As of September 2002, according to FDIC figures, the insurance fund was still out \$440 million after this settlement.

But it gets even sweeter for the Pritzkers. The FDIC also agreed to pay the Pritzkers 25 percent of any claim won in a lawsuit against Ernst & Young. Since the FDIC is now suing for \$548

"I worked 23 years for a company, and got this money from them. ... The Pritzker family and Dworman stole it from me."

accounting of the residual assets had been wrong. The bank was deeply troubled even in good times, but the vulnerabilities would only increase. As interest rates declined, borrowers would try to pay off high-interest loans and refinance; as unemployment rose, increasing numbers of subprime borrowers would default.

After downgrading the bank further, regulators concluded that it was "significantly undercapitalized" and needed an infusion of \$270 million, which the Pritzkers—with some participation by

million, the Pritzker share could be \$137 million. On top of that, the agreement stated that the Pritzkers get half of any civil penalties from such a lawsuit (after certain agency expenses). The FDIC is asking for triple damages, or \$1.64 billion; the Pritzker share could be over \$800 million.

Even taking into account the "record" settlement they made with the FDIC, the Pritzkers could make more than \$700 million in additional profit for running a financial institution into

the ground. They had already profited handsomely, sharing in the more than \$200 million in dividends to the owners in the '90s. They accomplished all this with an investment of about \$21 million for each partner—though the Pritzkers had also already benefited from \$645 million in tax credits.

Meanwhile, roughly 1,000 depositors who had deposits above \$100,000 in a Superior account—money above the FDIC-insured limit—lost about \$65 million. Most of them were middle-class individuals, attracted by Superior's high interest rates. In the three months just before the bank was closed, there was a surge of \$9.6 million in uninsured deposits. Since about 54 percent of the uninsured money has since been repaid as Superior was sold off, the depositors have still collectively lost about \$30 million. (That just happens to be the amount that the Pritzkers gave to the University of Chicago's Pritzker School of Medicine earlier this year.)

Some of that money could have paid back Fran Sweet for the roughly \$138,000 that she has still not recovered from her deposits at Superior. After retiring as a manager at a telecommunications company, Sweet was seeking a secure place to put her entire retirement savings of about \$500,000. "I knew the Pritzkers were owners of the bank," she says, "and they were a reputable name in Chicago. I had no idea that the bank was in trouble."

She even asked a bank manager if there was anything wrong with the bank. "She said, 'No, nothing is wrong. We're owned by the Pritzkers,'" Sweet recalls. "I want it all back. I worked 23 years for a company and got this money from them as a buyout, and the Pritzker family and Dworman stole it from me."

People at the other end of the deal—who borrowed from Superior—are also still hurting as a result of the scam. The National Community Reinvestment Coalition, which monitors bank lending, last year accused Superior of participating in a variety of predatory practices, including overly aggressive telemarketing, targeting low-income minority borrowers, and disproportionately incorporating problematic "balloon payments" in the loans. One borrower in Philadelphia, rep-

resented by attorney Brian Milkenberg, ended up in bankruptcy partly because Superior didn't properly credit him for payments he had made. In another case, Cleveland construction worker Dan Sutton claims that a broker for Superior falsified papers to inflate his mortgage and charged exorbitant fees.

The Pritzkers are likely to make out like bandits, which is exactly what customers like Sweet and Sutton think they are. All of the government studies of Superior's failure agree that there's plenty of blame to spread around. As the FDIC inspector general's report concluded, the bank managers pursued an ultra-risky strategy based on unrealistic assumptions and unjustifiably pumped dividends and illegal, unpaid loans out of the bank and into the owners' coffers.

Ernst & Young provided inaccurate audits, resisted regulators, and did not test or properly disclose crucial financial assumptions. The OTS didn't investigate or follow up on problems adequately, ignored warning signs for years, and unduly relied on the expertise of managers, the auditor's report, and the promise of the wealthy owners to put their money behind the bank's strategy, which they ultimately refused to do. While the FDIC lawsuit against Ernst & Young correctly highlights the accounting firm's sorry record of accounting malpractice, it ignores the dubious history of the Pritzkers and Dworman in cases ranging from tax evasion to bank mismanagement, instead praising the Pritzkers for their charity.

What looked like a good deal for the FDIC in resolving Superior's failure is now looking like yet another opportunity for the wealthy Pritzkers to further profit from their misdeeds. Certainly, the record suggests that Ernst & Young bears responsibility, but so do the Pritzkers and Dworman. The question is not just who will extract money from whose pocket in the aftermath of the bank failure, but also whether the rich are simply above the law. The RICO lawsuit against bank managers, owners and auditors raises the issue of criminal conspiracy and at least attempts to recover damages for the uninsured depositors. But beyond that, argues thrift watchdog Anderson, "I think there ought to be a criminal investigation." ■

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Who Needs NATO?

The Cold War alliance expands to Eastern Europe

By Tony Wesolowsky

PRAGUE

At the end of November, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization will invite seven Eastern European states to join the 53-year-old military alliance. The three Baltic states (Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia) plus Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria will likely be admitted, bringing the alliance to 26 nations. The move would put another 40 million people under NATO's security blanket, stretching its borders from the Baltic coast to the Black Sea.

NATO has never been just a military club. From its inception in 1949, it has had two key goals: legitimating U.S. military and political presence across Western Europe and containing Russia. But since the Communist collapse in 1989, NATO has been looking for a new mission. On September 11, 2001, NATO finally thought it had found it: the war on terrorism.

The next day, NATO dusted off the nearly forgotten Article Five of its founding charter, which states an attack on one is an attack on all. Since no NATO member had ever been attacked, it had never been imposed. This move signaled the willingness of U.S. allies to fight shoulder-to-shoulder against al-Qaeda.

But when the United States went to war in Afghanistan, it mostly snubbed the alliance. Bush politely turned down NATO aid, working instead with selected allies. And if and when the United States attacks Iraq, NATO will likely play a peripheral role, if at all. So why is NATO still around?

Despite its flaws and Bush's go-it-alone attitude, NATO remains Washington's best tool for projecting power in Europe. Indeed, since the end of the Cold War, Washington has fought to keep NATO relevant. This latest expansion will spread the American presence to Russia's borders, and more importantly, to the oil riches of the Caspian Sea. And with parts of Europe inching closer toward integration, NATO expansion will keep the United States anchored on the continent for decades to come.

It was never a question of whether NATO would expand, but rather when. The seeds were planted shortly after the Berlin Wall fell, when a power vacuum opened across Eastern Europe, triggering calls for new structures of collective security. The obvious choice seemed the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Indeed, the OSCE was strengthened as a pan-European security forum, recognized as a U.N. regional organization, and charged with reducing conflict and promot-

After September 11, 2001, NATO thought it had found its new mission: the war on terrorism.

ing the peaceful settlement of disputes. Leading Central Europeans, like Czech President Vaclav Havel, backed the OSCE, which had helped him and other dissidents in their struggle against the old regime.

But U.S. officials were adamant that NATO remain pre-eminent. In 1991, Secretary of State James Baker made clear NATO's plans "to build partnerships with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union." Later that year, the North Atlantic Cooperation Council was unveiled, establishing ties with former Warsaw Pact members.

"It is of fundamental importance to preserve NATO as the primary instrument of Western defense and security," a 1992 Pentagon document stated, "as well as the channel for U.S. influence and participation in European security affairs."

Yugoslavia presented an opportunity for NATO to prove itself and resolve its identity crisis. Just reunified, Germany was beginning to reassert influence in 1991 and saw Yugoslavia as fertile ground to flex its diplomatic muscles. In January 1992, Germany strongarmed the European Union to recognize the independence of Croatia and Slovenia, emboldening both states to pursue independence. President Bush balked. Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger stated that Germany "was getting out ahead of the United States" with its Croatia policy.

Later that year, the United States sanctioned Muslim leader Alija Izetbegovic's pursuit for Bosnian independence, despite warnings that such a move would worsen the situation on the ground. The United States ignored those calls and torpedoed several European initiatives to resolve the conflict. By 1995, NATO was bombing in Bosnia, which had spun out of control.

Bosnia proved Europeans incapable of resolving their own affairs without American resolve and NATO's might. Clinton administration Defense Secretary William Perry argued that although American "vital interests" were not in themselves threatened in Bosnia, U.S. involvement "affects the vital national security interest of the U.S. by maintaining the strength and credibility of NATO."

Bosnia enhanced NATO's credibility, but one key piece of the NATO expansion puzzle still remained elusive: Russia. In the summer of 1996, Russian President Boris Yeltsin was battling for his political life against Communist Party chief Gennady Zjuganov in the presidential elections. Any talk of NATO expansion could have tipped the scales in favor of Zjuganov's anti-Western camp. But a few months after Yeltsin won the election, with more than a little chicanery, Clinton announced plans to expand NATO. To reward Yeltsin for his acquiescence, Washington offered Russia the ballyhooed but meaningless Russia-NATO Joint Council in 1997.

Two years later, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland were officially admitted ahead of NATO's "jubilee" summit in

Washington, where the alliance marked its 50th birthday. The summit gave birth to a "new strategic concept" that transformed NATO into a global police force under U.S. dominance and outside U.N. control. NATO couched the shift as "Building a stronger and broader Euro-Atlantic community of democracies." Following this mission U-turn, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan warned of "a return to the system of spheres of influence founded on the specific interests of states rather than the principle of shared responsibility."

The first "test" of this new concept was the 1999 bombing in Yugoslavia to end the persecution of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. The 78-day crusade marked the first time NATO had intervened in a non-member sovereign state without a U.N. blessing. Slobodan Milosevic's ouster illustrated how NATO served American geo-strategic goals. The *New York Times* wrote then that without Milosevic, "the last major obstacle to a Europe of ... market economies from the Atlantic to the Urals would disappear."

NATO expansion will add U.S.-friendly states in Europe. Eager to please Washington, the NATO wanna-bes sought to prove themselves in Afghanistan. Romania sent more than 400 troops in Lockheed Martin C-130 transport aircraft donated by the United States and was one of a handful of countries to sign a bilateral agreement with the United States vowing not to

The new NATO members are U.S. allies to counter the influence of the European Union.

extradite any U.S. citizens should the International Criminal Court come a-calling. Bulgaria has said it will open its airspace in case of a U.S. attack on Iraq and offered an airfield for refueling tankers in the Afghan campaign. In appreciation, Washington doled out \$55 million in military aid last year for the countries to split.

In strategic terms, Bulgaria and Romania, along with Slovenia, will cement NATO's hold over the Balkans. Bulgaria and Romania, moreover, will bridge the gap between Central Europe and NATO's only Muslim member, Turkey, a key state in any U.S. military attack on Iraq.

"Once it secures the Black Sea's western rim—and cements the link with the southern Turkish rim—NATO will be better positioned to reach out to Georgia and Azerbaijan and uphold a common set of interests centered on regional security, energy development and transit routes," Vladimir Socor, a senior analyst with the conservative Jamestown Foundation wrote in the *Wall Street Journal* in August.

The military midgets, like Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovenia will also serve up soldiers for future "peace-keeping forces," a task the United States detests. "For our allies, sharing the enormous opportunities of Eurasia also means sharing the burdens and risks of sustaining the peace," Bush said.

For the Baltic states, NATO membership separates them once and for all from Russia. Latvian President Vaira Vike-Freiberga told the *Washington Post* in October that her main reason for joining NATO was simply "the fact that you can go to bed and not worry about somebody knocking on the door and putting you on a train to Siberia."

The admission of the Baltics is hard for Russia to swallow, even though it officially dropped its opposition after 9/11. At an August NATO meeting in Warsaw, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov asked if these states could at least sign the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty, a Cold War-era document spelling out the amount of troops and hardware that can be deployed on the continent. U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld denied the request.

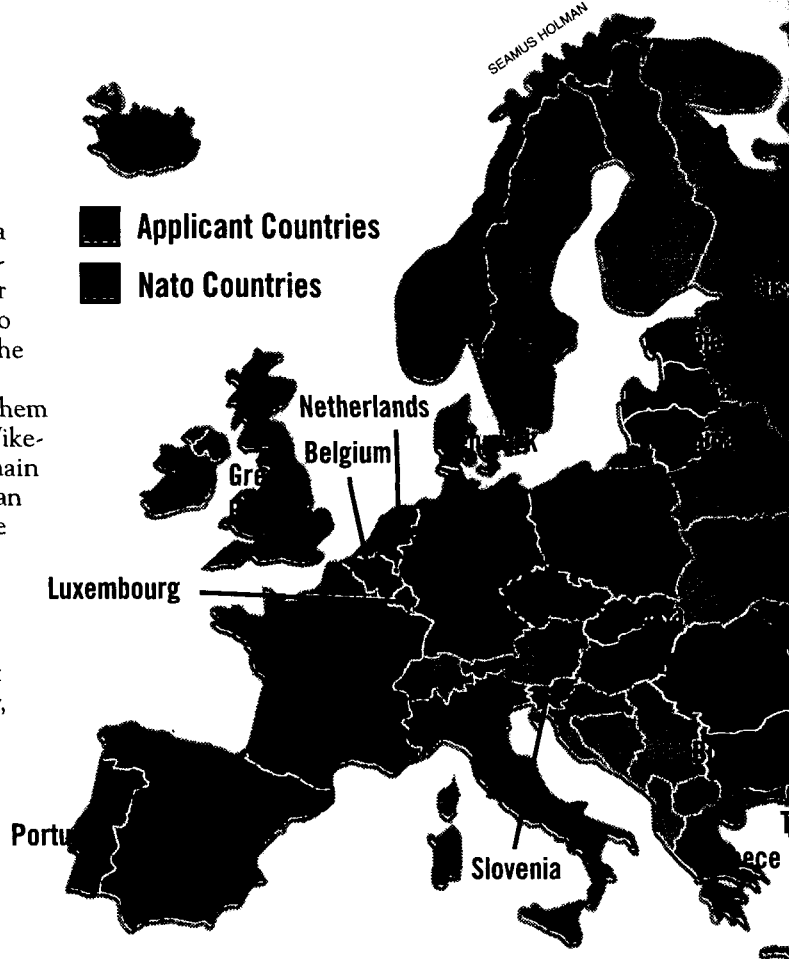
But the war on terrorism has an upside for Russia, allowing President Vladimir Putin to fight Chechen "terrorists" without a word from Washington or Brussels. Last May, NATO and Russia set up new council to give Russia a voice in some NATO affairs, from counterterrorism and controlling weapons of mass destruction to civil emergencies and sea rescue, though NATO decides what will be discussed. Putin has even talked of joining NATO.

No longer occupied with Moscow, Washington is beginning to worry about Brussels. The European Union is set to do some expanding of its own in a few years, uniting the continent from the Atlantic to the Bug River, which separates Poland from the rest of Eastern Europe. Ten states, including Malta and Cyprus, will begin the process in 2004, in what is being called one of the globe's biggest socio-economic undertakings. Former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing is heading a committee to study creating a constitution for a unified Europe. The path is not clear, but the European Union is gathering speed and could someday rival the United States as a superpower.

For the United States, new NATO members like Romania and Bulgaria are allies to counter the influence of the European Union, according to Carl Conetta, co-director of the Project on Defense Alternatives.

Europe is growing impatient with U.S. unilateralism, best illustrated by German and French opposition to U.S. actions in Iraq. And with the new American strategies of pre-emption and regime change, Europe feels dictated to more than ever. "Allies participate not only in the execution, but also the formation of policy. Ad-hoc coalitions of docile followers to be chosen or discarded at will are neither attractive nor sustainable," recently warned the normally unassuming Javier Solana, the E.U. foreign policy chief and former NATO secretary-general.

But there is little Europe can do. At almost \$400 billion, the U.S. military budget will account for 45 percent of the world's total military expenditure next year, according to *Foreign Policy*



in *Focus*, or approximately as much as all of its NATO allies, plus Russia and China, combined. Efforts to set up a European "rapid-reaction" force have stumbled so far. But with this 60,000-man force set to begin operations next year, suddenly Washington wants the same type of force for NATO—what Gowan calls Washington's attempt to trump the Europeans.

NATO chief George Robertson told Reuters in September he was "very concerned ... about the lack of movement in linking the European Union to NATO in the permanent arrangements that were foreseen as part of this great project."

Washington has long been wary of European efforts to go it alone on defense. As the European Union's security and defense policy emerged in the late '90s, Washington perked up to the idea of NATO expansion, according to Sean Kay, a professor at Ohio Wesleyan University. And when the European Union and Russia discussed a strategic alliance in October 1999, Washington needed no more convincing. "If momentum on NATO enlargement stalled, candidates seeking both NATO and E.U. membership might prioritize military coordination with the European Union, thus undermining America's influence in Central and Eastern Europe," Kay explained in a recent policy paper.

More strains between Europe and the United States could emerge. A senior NATO official said in October that Bush is likely to urge the alliance to sanction pre-emptive attacks.

More than three centuries ago, Thomas Hobbes noted that alliances typically fall apart after the threat against which they were created has disappeared. Such is its hubris, Washington will try to prove history wrong. ■

Tony Wesolowsky covers Eastern and Central Europe from Prague.

If You Only Knew

By Bill Boisvert

With each new corporate scandal reminding us how far out of the loop we are, Americans are obsessed with insiders. We are convinced

Secrets: A Memoir of Vietnam and the Pentagon Papers

By Daniel Ellsberg

Viking

498 pages, \$29.95

that inside information is superior to public information, and lionize whistle-blowers who lay bare the hidden workings of power. But strangely, when revelations come, they invariably do no more than affirm what is already common knowledge. When the secret tobacco company files surfaced in the '90s, a development hyperbolized in the movie *The Insider*, the revelation they contained was that—steady, now—cigarettes are addictive and bad for your health. And if Congress ever succeeds in prying loose the secret files of Dick Cheney's Energy Task Force, will anyone be shocked by the discovery that Enron was rewriting the nation's energy regulations?

One touchstone of the cult of insiderism—the idea that what the public knows is a smokescreen of lies, that what's really going on goes on behind the closed doors of institutional secrecy—is the Pentagon Papers. When this top-secret government study of U.S. policy in Vietnam through 1968 was leaked, the legend goes, it told the real story—the inside story—of Vietnam, documenting the callousness of policy-makers' calculations and the duplicity with which they were sold to a gullible Congress and public. The revelations provoked unprecedented acts of censorship. The Nixon administration went to court to try to bar newspapers from publishing the documents, making the Papers a *cause célèbre*. The controversy set a template—a conspiracy of the powerful, unmasked by a crusading press that rouses an enraged populace from its slumber—that would inform populist iconography for a generation to come.

But like other insiderist legends, this tale is a myth. To be sure, the Papers document, across 23 years and four presidencies, four constants of U.S. policy: that the unpopular South Vietnamese regime was never anything but the creature of the United States; that Vietnamese interests always took a backseat to the imperial goal of securing America's "reputation as a guarantor"; that the U.S. blocked negotiations among the Vietnamese that might lead to "neutralism" or "accommodation" with the Communists; and that the U.S. government consistently misrepresented its agenda.

Although the Papers stood the official story on its head, they had virtually no

contest the government's pronouncements on the conduct and motives of the war. "We had to destroy the town to save it" had become the war's absurdist epitaph. By June 1971, the Tet Offensive had driven Johnson from office, the My Lai massacre had made the front pages, students had been shot at Kent State, Jane Fonda had been to Hanoi and a majority of Americans were telling pollsters the war was morally wrong. There was no one left to disillusion.

That's the unintended irony of *Secrets*, a memoir by Daniel Ellsberg, the man who leaked the Pentagon Papers. His premise is that "secrets of the greatest import ... can be kept reliably for decades by the executive branch, even though they are known to thousands of insiders," to the detriment of democracy. It's a dubious claim that's hardly borne out by



Daniel Ellsberg, shown with his wife Patricia, was cleared of wrongdoing in May 1973.

effect on Americans' perceptions of the war. For all the commotion surrounding their publication in June 1971, they were yesterday's news. By that time, six years of stalemated fighting had discredited the government's claims of progress. TV newscasts had broadcast the devastation of South Vietnam by U.S. bombing and search-and-destroy missions. A huge anti-war movement had grown up to

the evidence in his book, and it's part of a wrongheaded but still influential idea on the left—that the American people are innocents whose inchoate anti-imperialism will erupt once the facts about the government's interventionist schemes are exposed. These misapprehensions mar Ellsberg's often very perceptive account of the times, causing him to grossly inflate the relevance of inside information to the

forces that shaped the Vietnam era. Worse, although he was immersed in it, he misses the bigger story of the vast politico-cultural effort by the left to convince Americans of a politics of anti-imperialism.

Ellsberg went from high-level berths at the Pentagon and the Rand Corporation, advising the likes of Robert McNamara and Henry Kissinger, to center-stage in the peace movement, getting maced by cops while marching shoulder-to-shoulder with Noam Chomsky. Along the way, he spent two years in Vietnam, nominally with the civilian pacification program, but really as a student-at-large of the war. He witnessed the antagonism between the corrupt and brutal South Vietnamese regime and the peasantry, who turned to the Viet Cong as much for protection as out of political sympathy. An ex-Marine, Ellsberg tagged along on American combat patrols and even led an assault on a Viet Cong machine-gun nest. He watched the guerrillas dodge air strikes and run circles around the plodding GIs, who started shooting up and torching random villages in frustration.

Ellsberg was an insider at the Pentagon, in the rice paddy and on the picket line. The breadth of his experience is probably unique and gives him, at times, a sharply insightful perspective. His take on the Pentagon bureaucracy, while strongly critical, never lapses into Strangelovian clichés and stays alive to the human foibles of the policy-making apparatus. He has enough of the Corps in him to condemn the U.S. military as much for its unsoldierly slackness and incompetence as for its overkill, and enough of the Rand analyst to avoid grunts-eye-view sentimentality and pinpoint larger flaws in military doctrine. His chapters from Vietnam, in particular, are some of the best ever written on the war.

But insiderism has its discontents. By the time he returned from Vietnam in 1967, Ellsberg says, the policy establishment agreed with him that the war was a lost cause; but despite his and others' arguments for de-escalation, the war dragged on. (Ellsberg joined the Pentagon Papers project to try to understand this conundrum.) And there was a deeper problem, which Ellsberg points out to Kissinger:

It will become very hard for you to learn from anybody who doesn't have

[super-secret] clearances. Because you'll be thinking as you listen to them:

"What would this man be telling me if he knew what I know?" ... You'll give up trying to assess what he has to say. ...

You'll become something like a moron ... incapable of learning from most people in the world, no matter how much experience they may have.

As insiders stopped listening to the world, the world stopped listening to insiders.

Much of *Secrets* is an account of Ellsberg's efforts to escape this hall of mirrors. As his frustration over the war mounted, he gravitated to the peace movement and began to experience the paradigm shift that was radicalizing so many others. Indeed, his was a classic '60s journey of protracted consciousness-raising. "She was ... beautiful," he stammers of one Indian pacifist who stayed up all night with him discussing Gandhi. Leaving the theater after seeing *Easy Rider*, another date stuns him with the news that she is smuggling draft dodgers to Canada. A speech by a draft resister provokes a full-blown conversion experience: "My sobbing sounded like laughing, at other times like moaning. ... It was as though an ax had split my head and my heart broke open."

The tension between his insider and outsider perspectives led to what was

For all the commotion surrounding their release in June 1971, the Pentagon Papers were already old news.

clearly an intellectually and emotionally traumatic break with the Rand-Pentagon elite. His leaking of the Papers may have been on some level an atonement for his past association with it.

But Ellsberg has never quite left the blinkered mindset of the insider behind, and it continues to distort his understanding of the Pentagon Papers. His work on the project was a typical insider strategy—more inside information would illuminate the failure of insiders—and the analysis of them in *Secrets* is in part a vindication of insiders. The files Ellsberg read

demolished the "quagmire theory" that the United States had been drawn by well-intentioned miscalculations into an unwinnable conflict.

Instead, he found that policy-makers understood from the outset that South Vietnam was unsalvageable, that U.S. intervention would require upwards of a million troops (and possibly nuclear weapons), and that even then victory would be doubtful. Rather than being misled by bad advice, presidents from Eisenhower to Johnson had gone against the insider consensus, dragging the American people along through manipulation and fraud. Ellsberg therefore decided to breach the wall of secrecy shielding "inordinate, unchallenged executive power" from accountability for its "desperate, outlaw behavior" in Vietnam.

The somewhat prim lesson Ellsberg draws from this—of the need to buttress the constitutional separation of powers to hobble presidential war-making—is unobjectionable, but inadequate for understanding Vietnam policy. His portrait of an executive branch run amok is no more tenable than the quagmire theory. It downplays serious disagreements among advisers about the prospects for intervention and gives short shrift to the political context of presidential decision-making.

Domestic opinion was never uniformly dovish (Ellsberg admits that the public were usually more hawkish than the insiders), and presidents acted with an eye to powerful pro-war constituencies. Kennedy's advisers warned of "bitter domestic controversies" that would "divide the country and harass the administration" if South Vietnam fell; as late as the summer of 1967, Senate hawks held hearings demanding an escalation of the air war. Far from a "desperate, outlaw" tangent, presidential policy persistently aligned itself with domestic political pressures.

Even the Tonkin Gulf incident, exhibit A in Ellsberg's indictment of executive branch deception, tells more about congressional acquiescence than presidential perfidy. Ellsberg quotes Sen. William Proxmire saying he would not have voted for the Tonkin Gulf Resolution had he known the incident was a fraud, but lets this self-serving excuse pass without asking why Proxmire felt a bloodless patrol-boat skirmish justified writing a blank check to the president for unlimited war.

Daniel Ellsberg (at right in Vietnam in 1967) was an insider at the Pentagon, on the battlefield and on the picket line. But the horror of U.S. policy in Vietnam was already well known before he leaked his inside information.

Instead of probing congressional support for the war, he offers a morality play about a Machiavellian executive and a bamboozled legislature.

One could argue that the public would have been more dovish had they possessed inside information; that's Ellsberg's rationale for leaking the Papers. But secrecy never impeded a substantive anti-war critique, as Ellsberg's own experience shows. Writing of an anti-war demo in April 1965, just weeks after American ground troops landed in Vietnam, he notes that the speakers "were on solid ground, even if they didn't have inside information." They had their own sources, no less (and perhaps more) informed than the Pentagon; journalists like Jonathan Schell had written harrowing exposés quite early in the war. Indeed, Ellsberg's own keenest insights into the war's illegitimacy, he tells us, came from reading French historians, not the Papers. The truth was out there—theorized by intellectuals, reported by journalists, confirmed by veterans, propounded by activists—from the start, even if it took a while to sink in.

Because Ellsberg still sees the war as a struggle between policy factions arguing over intelligence estimates, this larger picture eludes him. Vietnam was not the pet project of a rogue president or a coterie of planners; it was a product of the Cold War consensus. It was the long, twilight struggle Kennedy promised us, a reprise of conflicts over Korea or Berlin of the sort the country had decided it would fight without a clear-cut victory. Insider pessimism was matched by a conviction, widely shared by the body politic and policed by anti-communist ideologues, that the effort was worth it.

The war would therefore end not with the revelation of secrets but with a revolution in consciousness that repudiated the Cold War consensus—one grounded in public weariness with the material and moral costs of "twilight struggles" and



PETER ARNETT, FROM COLLECTION OF DANIEL ELLSBERG

swayed by the New Left's overt anti-imperialism and nonviolence. Ellsberg's own change of heart on the war was a microcosm of how that revolution reoriented public attitudes. The revolution penetrated the Pentagon Papers themselves. "A feeling is widely and deeply held," wrote Assistant Defense Secretary John McNaughton, "that 'the Establishment' is out of its mind ... that we are trying to impose some U.S. image on distant peoples we cannot understand (any more than we can the younger generation here at home)."

The Papers were an anti-climax. The war continued; six months after their publication, Ellsberg glumly notes, they had accomplished "nothing." Thus Ellsberg's hopes that the Papers would help thwart Nixon's secret intentions to expand the war in Indochina proved illusory. (Although he tries to justify them with this tortured causal chain: in trying to smear Ellsberg after the Papers came out, the Nixon administration ordered the burglary of his psychiatrist's office, which came to light and added

fuel to the Watergate scandal, which depleted Nixon's political capital so much that when Congress finally cut off funding for the bombing of Indochina, Nixon did not veto the measure.)

But the Papers' effects were illusory largely because Nixon's plans were not secret—even the "secret" bombing of Cambodia was rather promptly reported in the *New York Times*—and not out of line with public opinion. Indeed, the Nixon administration, for all its skulduggery, shows quite dramatically the irrelevance of insiderism. Nixon deliberately cultivated a reputation for desperate outlawry to frighten the Communists. Unlike the Papers, his secret tapes, which Ellsberg generously quotes, are unsettling to this day:

NIXON: I still think we ought to take the [North Vietnamese] dikes out now. Will that drown people?

KISSINGER: About two hundred thousand people.

N: ... I'd rather use the nuclear bomb. Have you got that, Henry?

K: That, I think, would just be too much.

N: The nuclear bomb, does that bother you? ... I just want you to think big, Henry, for Christsakes.

Nixon settled for conventional bombing, with the proviso that "we're gonna bomb those bastards all over the place. Let it fly, let it fly." But despite his deranged bunker mentality, his overall policy was one of dutiful de-escalation and withdrawal—cannily calibrated to undercut opposition to the war and win re-election in a landslide. As much as he longed to, he could not ignore the new consensus that the country would not bear any burden or oppose any foe, and that some things would just be too much—the unfinished revolution in consciousness we call the "Vietnam syndrome."

By focusing public ire on corporate evildoers and corrupt politicians, by deflecting attention from bad policy to the coverup of bad policy, the cult of insiderism has left a pernicious legacy. Take the 2000 presidential election, a textbook case of an insider cabal—the Jeb Bush-Katherine Harris cabal, the

Supreme Court Five cabal, take your pick—thwarting the popular will, and also a textbook case of insiderist obtuseness. The firestorm over a few hundred Florida ballots took the spotlight off Gore's extra half-million ballots; while in the debate over which gang had betrayed the Constitution, the Constitution's betrayal of democracy by way of the Electoral College was swept under the rug. Thus an opportunity for systemic reform, embedded in a priceless teachable moment of constitutional crisis, was dissipated in a trivial search for villains.

Even worse are the insidious long-term effects of insiderism. By deriding the machinery of democratic governance as a sham that disguises the behind-the-scenes machinations of insiders, it implies that democratic government is for suckers, that democracy is inescapably the captive of well-connected interests at odds with the public good. The result is to further a political culture of irresponsibility and

The cult of insiderism implicitly derides democracy itself, and lets both corrupt legislators and cynical voters off the hook.

uninvolvement that lets everyone off the hook—legislators, who ratify bad policy behind feigned ignorance and belated outrage, and the public at large, who retreat from the hard work of political engagement into free-floating cynicism.

Ellsberg's concerns about the constitutional separation of powers and abuses by the executive branch are pertinent today, as an undeclared war gathers under the most venal and secretive administration in recent history. The

Republicans' wholesale auction of policy to campaign donors, their lockdown on formerly public information and their penchant for incognito detentions make such anxieties plausible again. And unlike the witch hunts of the Clinton years, suspicions about the Bush administration are well-founded in real damage done to the public weal.

But it would be a mistake to revive the cult of insiderism. All of Bush's misdeeds are done in the glare of press coverage, with the informed consent of Congress. And they are in no way a departure from our national culture of heedless, oil-addicted crony capitalism. Bush comes from Texas; Texas doesn't come from Bush. What we need is not secret information, but a revolution in consciousness that will, as in the '60s, challenge the national consensus in far-reaching ways. ■

Bill Boisvert is an *In These Times* contributing editor.



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As the World Yearns

By Joshua Rothkopf

When a movie gets it all impeccably, heartbreakingly right, as does Todd Haynes' stunning *Far from Heaven*, some critics are tempted to gush deepest purple. While such valentine hues wouldn't necessarily clash

sweetly attentive young gardener. (Shouldn't we be kinder to the legacy of Rock Hudson?) Sirk's *Heaven* was further complexified by Rainer Werner Fassbinder's powderkeg 1974 remake, *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul*, which made over the gardener into an Arab émigré. Now Haynes trumps them both, adding available integrationist anxieties (his gardener is black) and reviving the widow's dead husband. Here he's very much alive, pursuing closeted impulses of his own in private clubs off the beaten path. If movies like this were made back then, we'd be a happier species; luckily, it's never too late to evolve.

Of course, the movie belongs to Julianne Moore, luminous in period chiffon and a strawberry-blond halo. She seems wrest from a different Hollywood altogether—the one that used to know what to do with

Dennis Haysbert), and retenses even after getting to know him when NAACP recruiters surprise her on her doorstep.

But Haynes' real coup might be his expansion of the drama to a trio and the agonized confusion he solicits from Dennis Quaid, in a magnificent career revision, as the husband. It's top-notch support, all the more tender for balancing jealousy with unexplainable passions that demand reckoning. Consider the other great performance from Haynes' young body of work, Christian Bale's vulnerable journalist in the glam rock elegy *Velvet Goldmine*, and you'll recognize his key theme is revolution. His characters are radicals five minutes ahead of the curve; they alone see the possibility of a bolder happiness and leap for it. That they always fall doesn't diminish *Far from Heaven* as the American picture of the year.

Far from Heaven
Written and directed by Todd Haynes

8 Mile
Directed by Curtis Hanson

with the plush high-Eisenhower decor on display here, I'll try to stay anchored to more sensible levels of bliss. Like *The Ice Storm*, this is a fall story set in a well-liquored, clannish Connecticut enclave. (Disconnecticut would be more appropriate.) But whereas Rick Moody's swingers flirted vacantly to the low-level hum of Watergate, Haynes aims one generation earlier—at their chrome-plated but equally dysfunctional parents.

Far from Heaven is autumnal in the larger sense too, a fall from late-'50s marital grace into gorgeously intense despair. (Elmer Bernstein's luxurious piano cascades are only the first hints of ripeness.) There's a word for such movies, a dirty word which I'm inclined not to use for obvious reasons: Is there anything more tragic than the modern discrediting of the melodrama? Cacklers invade today's screenings of Lon Chaney and Joan Crawford, but to deny the melodrama's power is to ignore cinema's rawest intimacies and fears. And if *Titanic*'s billion-dollar haul wasn't evidence enough, here's Haynes to show us that melodrama can still devastate audiences willing to check their irony at the door.

As his title implies, the picture is a riff on Douglas Sirk's *All That Heaven Allows*, in which a proper upper-middle-class widow falls scandalously for her



Dennis Quaid and Julianne Moore: Christmas in purgatory.

feminine poise and the dignified balancing acts of Hepburns and Stanwycks. Moore has been excellent before, particularly with Haynes in his chilly *Safe*, but never this physically attuned: She knows just how to lean back in sunny oblivion for a society columnist's photoessay on "Mr. and Mrs. Magnatech," basking in the life and lie. But it's also in the way she tenses at her first sight of the negro in her bushes (the superb

Imagine my surprise to discover the yearning soul of a melodramatist in, of all people, Eminem. *8 Mile* will make him

an even bigger star—which is fine by me if it means more vehicles as classically structured as this hip-hop variant on the *Saturday Night Fever* dream-your-way-to-the-top formula. Actually, the model may be closer to *Rocky*, with down-and-out street poets seething to life in ferocious battles of rapping skill, captured by cinematographer Rodrigo Prieto like the frenetic dogfights of his work on *Amores Perros*.

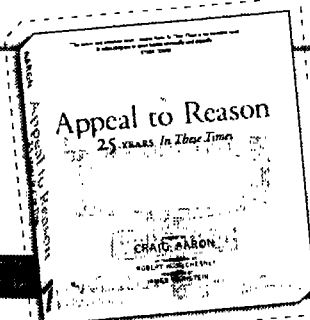
To answer the question on everyone's lips: Yes, the guy can act. (What exactly has Eminem been doing over these last few provocative years, if not acting?) There is a certain hollowness to his gaze, scanning over Detroit's ruined squalor, that the less charitable might call stagefright, though even this has been cleverly integrated into the role. I'd sooner call him courageous than savvy. Curtis Hanson, a fine director of blocked characters, turns it all around to a point where you might actually be wondering if Eminem can, in fact, rap. When he ultimately does, the movie explodes. ■

Joshua Rothkopf can be reached at rothkopf@inthesetimes.com.

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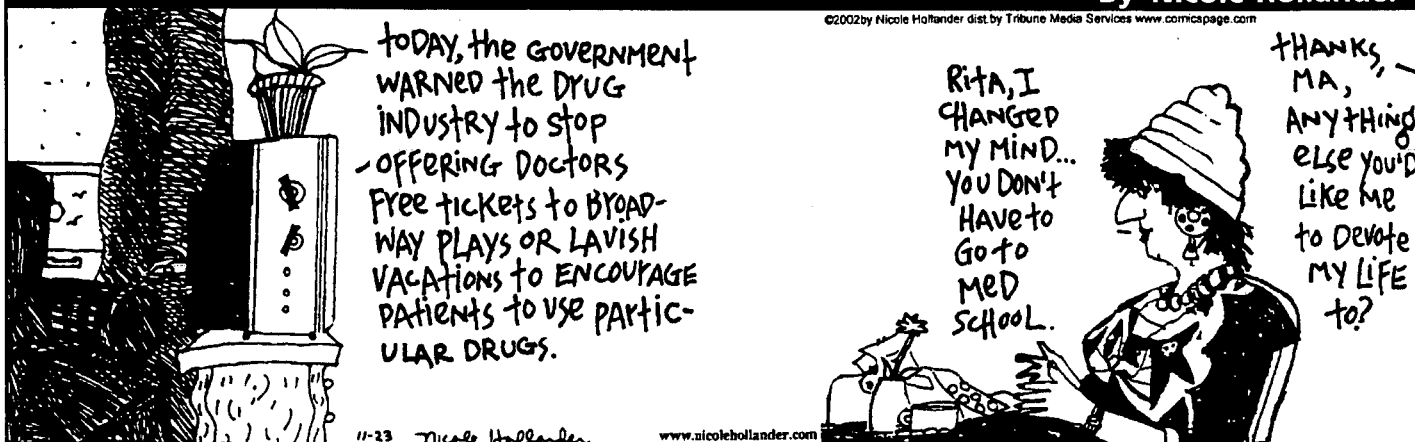
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SYLVIA

By Nicole Hollander



Continued from back cover

I went to the White House when Harvey Weinstein was showing Clinton the movie *Welcome to Sarajevo*, which I was in. I got a few moments alone with Clinton. Saddam throwing out the weapons inspectors was all over the news, and I asked what he was going to do. His answer was very revealing. He said: "Everybody is telling me to bomb him. All the military are saying, 'You gotta bomb him.' But if even one innocent person died, I couldn't bear it."



And I looked in his eyes and I believed him. Little did I know he was blocking humanitarian aid at the time, allowing the deaths of thousands of innocent people.

I am a father, and no amount of propaganda can convince me that half a million dead children is acceptable "collateral damage." The fact is that Saddam Hussein was our boy. The CIA helped him to power, as they did the Shah of Iran and Noriega and Marcos and the Taliban and countless other brutal tyrants. The fact is that George Bush Sr. continued to supply nerve gas and technology to Saddam even after he used it on Iran and then the Kurds in Iraq. While the Amnesty International report listing countless Saddam atrocities, including gassing and torturing Kurds, was sitting on his desk, Bush Sr. pushed through a \$2 billion "agricultural" loan, and Margaret Thatcher gave hundreds of millions in export credit to Saddam. The elder Bush then had the audacity to quote the Amnesty reports to garner support for his oil war.

A decade later, Shrub follows the same line: "We have no quarrel with the Iraqi people." I'm sure half a million Iraqi parents are scratching their heads over that. I'm an American tired of lies. And with our government, it's mostly lies.

To the men in Washington, the world is just a giant Monopoly board. Oddly enough, we Americans generally know how the government works. The politicians do everything they can for the people—the people who put them in power. The giant industries that are polluting our planet as well as violating human rights worldwide are the ones nearest and dearest to the hearts of American politicians.

But in wartime, people lose their senses. There are flags and yellow ribbons and posters and every media outlet is beating the war drum and even sensible people can hear nothing else. In the United States, God forbid you should suggest the war is unjust or that dropping cluster bombs from 30,000 feet on a city is a cowardly act. When TV satirist Bill Maher made some dissenting remarks about the bombing of Afghanistan, Disney pulled the plug on him. In a country that lauds its freedom of speech, a word of dissent can cost you your job.

If you consider money as a form of energy, then we see half our taxes and half the government's energy focused on war and weapons of mass destruction. Over the past 30 years, this amounts to more than \$10 trillion. Imagine that money going to preserving rainforest or contributing to a sustainable economy (as opposed to the dinosaur tit we are currently in the process of sucking dry).

I give in to Woodman, and we stop for a few beers. He asks me what I'd do in Bush's shoes. Easy: I'd honor Kyoto. Join the world court. I'd stop subsidizing earth rapers like Monsanto, Dupont and Exxon. I'd shut down the nuclear power plants. So I already have \$200 billion saved from corporate welfare. I'd save another \$100 billion by stopping the war on non-corporate drugs. And I'd cut the defense budget in half so they'd have to get by on a measly \$200 billion a year. I've already saved half a trillion bucks by saying no to polluters and warmongers.

Then I'd give \$300 billion back to the taxpayers. I'd take the rest and pay the people teaching our children what they deserve. I'd put \$100 billion into alternative fuels and renewable energy. I'd

revive the Chemurgy movement, which made the farmer the root of the economy, and make paper and fuel from wheat straw, rice straw and hemp. Not only would I attend, I'd sponsor the next Earth Summit. And, of course, I'd give myself a fat raise.

Woodman drops me at home, and I ask if he likes my ideas. He offers a reluctant "yes." As he pulls away he yells out, "But I'd never vote for a man who can't handle a few pints at the end of the day!" ■

Woody Harrelson is an actor and activist. A version of this story first ran in London's Guardian newspaper.

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Woody's Way

By Woody Harrelson

I have been in London for three months doing a play. The man who drives me to and from work is named Woody too. A relief to me, as it minimizes the chance of my forgetting his name. I call him Woodman, and he calls me Wood. He has become my best friend here, even though he's upset that I have quit drinking beer. He's smart, funny and there's nothing he hasn't seen in 33 years behind the wheel of his black cab. He drove me for a while before I felt confident he liked me; he doesn't like people easily, especially if they have a rap for busting up black cabs.

Woodman and I agree about a lot of things, but one thing we can never agree about is Iraq. He thinks the only language Saddam understands is brute force. I don't believe we should be bombing cities in our quest for one man. We've killed a million Iraqis since the start of the Gulf War—mostly by blocking humanitarian aid. Let's stop now. Thankfully, most of the Brits I talk to

about the war are closer to me than to Woodman. Only their prime minister doesn't seem to have noticed.

I am having the time of my life. I love England, the people, the parks, the theater. The play is great, and the audiences have been a dream. Probably I should just relax, be happy and talk about the weather, but this war is under my skin—it affects my sleep.

I remember playing basketball with an Iraqi in the late '80s while Iran and Iraq were at war. I didn't know at the time that the United States and Britain were supplying weapons to both sides. I asked why they were always at war with each other, and he said something that stayed with me: "If it were up to the people, there would be peace. It's the governments that create war."

And now my government is creating its second war in less than a year. No, war requires two combatants, so I should say "its second bombing campaign."

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